ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

PART SIXTEEN

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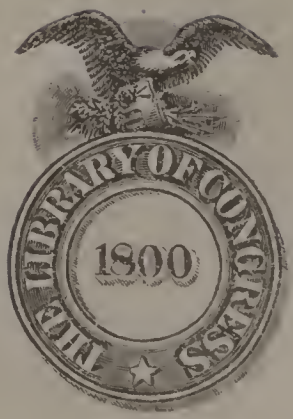

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ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

A CORRESPONDENCE COURSE IN LITERARY CRITICISM, INTERPRETATION AND HISTORY

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INCLUDING NUMEROUS MASTERPIECES

IN EIGHTEEN PARTS
PART SIXTEEN, HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHICAGO
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To the Student

The remaining numbers of the course are devoted to a history of literature in England and America. The story of growth and development is told chronologically, and an effort is made to give to contemporary history enough space to show the causes that led to the conditions existing at the several epochs. Brevity and simplicity characterize the work, but it is thought a distinct personality has been given to each of the great writers.

It is not the intention to duplicate anything in the preceding numbers, and consequently the history contains selections from only those authors not previously discussed. In study it will be necessary to have the other numbers at hand, because the references to them are numerous and important. These references, if properly read, will make a complete chronological review of the fifteen numbers and will enable the student to arrange the ideas he has gained, compare different authors of the same epoch, and finally to fix systematically his knowledge of literature and its history.

Unless the fact of relationship between the

parts of the course is borne in mind, this history may seem to slight some of the greatest authors whose masterpieces have been printed in earlier volumes, and of whom biographical sketches have been given. The casual reader might form a very erroneous opinion of the relative importance of the various ages if he based his judgment upon the space they occupy in this history. The last three parts of this course make with the preceding fifteen a unit; the three parts alone would be almost valueless.

In Part Eighteen is a complete general index to all the volumes, and this should be consulted at every step. The index gives ready access to every mention of an author, to every quotation from him and to the title of every selection printed in the course.

These last three numbers contain frequent questions and varied directions for specific study. The student is earnestly advised to use them to the best of his ability. They are a part of the scheme for review and should be interesting in themselves. Once more let it be said that in many cases the answers to the questions must be purely personal or of such a nature that people might not agree as to the correctness of them. However, the purpose

of the question has been accomplished when the student has formed his opinion from careful thought.

It is assumed that the characteristics of the different ages, their length and importance, and the causes that produced them will be mastered. While many dates are not necessary, some must be known. The student should associate great names and be able to recite in order at least those appearing in capitals in the tabular outline. He should know, too, the dates at which these writers lived, the dates of the four great periods and approximately those of the several ages.

But it is quite impossible to tell in detail here just how these numbers should be studied. They should be studied as other text books are, and also as the student has learned to work from the preceding numbers of this course. By this time he knows how a selection is to be approached, and has gained the power to master what he reads. It is hoped that he will find in the following numbers sufficient reward to justify his exertion.

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Period of Preparation

PRIOR TO THE BIRTH OF CHAUCER

670–1340 (?)

Beginnings

The Early Races

When the Romans, under Cæsar, invaded Britain, in 55 B. C., they found the island inhabited by the Celts. These early Britons were a vigorous race, gifted with vivid imagination, delicate sensibilities, and lively emotions. However attractive these qualities might make a people, they were insufficient to create a successful opposition to the more highly organized Roman civilization. But the Celts persisted in maintaining their individuality, and after about five centuries of Roman rule, though they had grown weak and enervated, had lost few of their other characteristics.

About 449 A. D., the Roman legions having been withdrawn, the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, three Teutonic tribes from the mainland, invaded Britain, and after repeated attempts, in the face of bitter opposition that lasted fully a century, succeeded in conquering the Celts. But they could not exterminate the vigorous race. Many remained, ultimately to mingle their blood with their conquerors, while the more hardy and restive ones took refuge in the mountain fastnesses of Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, where still the population is largely of Celtic origin. It is to

the invading Angles, who were numerous and occupied northern and central England, that the English language owes its name. The combined tribes bequeathed to the English their most prominent racial characteristics, as well as the Anglo-Saxon language, the basis of modern English.

The Anglo-Saxons were a fearless people who had lived in a rugged country where the climate and all the surroundings had tended to develop personal bravery and a profound contempt for mild manners and gentle accomplishments. Although coarse and brutal in their pleasures, they possessed a seriousness of character and a sturdy sense of right and manliness that made them fit subjects to receive the Christian religion. This was brought to them by St. Augustine, who visited the island at the instigation of Pope Gregory in 597. In the wake of Christianity followed the schools, so that the arts and sciences began to thrive in England as on the Continent.

King Alfred

Yet toward the middle of the ninth century the country had again sunk back toward the depths of barbarism, and the light of learning might have been wholly extinguished but for the noble King Alfred who came to the throne in the year 872. A man of strong character and deep piety, as well as of warlike nature and sturdy independence, he was perfectly fitted to become the most conspicuous figure of early English history. He founded the navy,

and by his successful wars firmly secured the island to its English inhabitants; then he reinstated the schools, established a code of laws, and gave wise encouragement to every form of profitable industry. He himself set the example, and did not hesitate to work with his own hands. The purpose of his life, expressed in his own words, was: "This I can now truly say, that so long as I have lived, I have striven to live worthily, and after my death to leave my memory to my descendants, in good works."

William the Conqueror

Less than two centuries after the death of Alfred occurred an event which again revolutionized the condition of things in England, and ultimately gave to the English race the elements previously lacking to make the greatest nation the world has known. In 1066 William the Conqueror landed in England, and at the battle of Hastings overthrew the English under Harold. Normandy, of which William was the duke, was a province of northern France, and its inhabitants, though of Scandinavian origin, had adopted French manners and customs and had acquired the polish and refinement of French civilization. The Normans completely subjugated the Anglo-Saxons, divided their lands and established a rule which made of the native English the merest serfs. Norman castles sprang up over the land and became centers for social enjoyment and knightly pleasures. The conquerors

were the most courtly race in Europe, and their love for art and refined pleasures was in striking contrast to the practical and matter-of-fact nature of the English. French was the language of the court and the ruling classes; English the language of the subjugated.

For many years, the two civilizations existed side by side and there was no seeming prospect of a union. But the Normans were versatile, easily influenced and changeable; the English steady, self-reliant, persistent. Though at times they seemed to lose their national spirit, there was always under the superficial Norman elegance the strong, tenacious spirit of the English common people.

After Normandy was lost to France and the Normans were left without direct official connection with the continent, they began to give way more and more to the quiet, continuous influence of their Anglo-Saxon neighbors, so that eventually they afforded for a second time the strange spectacle of a conquering race absorbed by the conquered. By the middle of the fourteenth century, the English race was well established and contained nearly all the elements that, steadily developing under the influence of advancing civilization, may be recognized by the student of today. The three main ones were the Celtic element from the early Britons; the Teutonic element that came with the Anglo-Saxon sea-kings;

and the Norman-French, brought by William across the English Channel. Each contributed its share to the national character: the Celts gave enthusiasm and delicacy of feeling; the Anglo-Saxons, vigor and stability; and the Norman-French, taste and refinement.

The Language

A person clings to his mother tongue with great tenacity and a race gives up its language with reluctance; yet the influence of time and environment makes changes and development certain. So by considering what races have made up the English and by remembering the predominating traits of each race, it is not impossible to say what has been the history of the language. The Celts made their contribution but it was absorbed by the already virile Anglo-Saxon. The Normans brought French and a host of words of Latin derivation which served to add a wider range and a greater elegance to the vocabulary. But to this day the words that give directness and vigor to our language, that speak of home and kindred and that are most common in our speech are of Anglo-Saxon origin.

But at the time last mentioned in the sketch of the people, this union of tongues was far from complete. Different dialects characterized different sections of England and the ratio of French words was much greater in and about London where the Norman court had so long held sway,

than it was to the north and south. Still, in the middle of the fourteenth century English had become the prescribed language of the realm and everywhere the current was setting strongly away from the Norman-French. Some standard was needed, some great work that should fix the use of words, not by law but by the rules of that higher court where the people judge the significance and value of words that give them their literature.

The Literature

The literature of a race is the most elegant expression of its best thought and feeling. Literature reflects the manners and customs of a people and shows their manifold peculiarities. Whatever affects national life affects the writers who in turn cast their influence over the progress of the race. Literature grows as a race grows and the various streams of humanity that have blended to make the English race have each controlled to a certain extent the English literature. There was an early Celtic literature, light and poetic, filled with delicate sentiment in which pathos and humor were blended. Few examples of it remain and what English literature owes to the Celt is an intermingling of the racial spirit that exists to this day. Besides this, many of the charming myths and legends which have served to inspire later writers have had their origin in the warm Celtic fancy. The legend of King Arthur and

the Knights of his Round Table, a purely Celtic story, has served to fire the imagination of writers, both of prose and poetry, from the days of Malory to those of Tennyson and Lowell. The art-loving Normans had their literature, but it was clothed in the language of France and was felt rather as an influence than as a component part of English literature. As our language is primarily Anglo-Saxon, modified by the great influences just described, so it is the Anglo-Saxon literature that forms the bone and sinew of our own.

Beowulf

The earliest literature of a race is poetry. The songs of the Saxon gleemen, celebrating courage and daring, fired the rough nature of these early warriors and urged them into fiercer combat. Some of these songs remain to us and Beowulf is the oldest of them. It is a poem of about six thousand lines and probably originated on the continent not long before the English invaded Britain. In form it has few of the characteristics of modern poetry. Though there is no attempt at a regular meter nor at rhyme, its lines are of nearly the same length and depend upon alliteration for what musical qualities they possess.

The story narrates the adventures of Beowulf in his expedition to slay Grendel, a huge monster that had for years devoured the Danish knights and devastated their kingdom. It is a vivid account and as sung at their feasts must have been

inspiring to the listening warriors. The poem was handed down by word of mouth, and was not reduced to writing till some time in the ninth century.

A few lines accompanied by their translation show through how great an evolution the language has passed:

"Thâ com of môre	"Then came from the moor
Under mist hleodhun	Under mist hills
Grendel gongan;	Grendel to go;
Goddes yrre bär."	God's ire he bare."

Cædmon

Interesting as Beowulf is, it is not truly English. The first poem originating in England is Cædmon's *Paraphrase*, a metrical version of parts of the bible. This was composed about 670, Cædmon dying in 680. He was not an educated man but claimed to have been told in a dream that he must sing. When he tried to do so the words came readily to him. These he remembered after he awakened and their excellence attracted the attention of the monks, who gave to Cædmon the opportunity to learn to read and understand the scriptures. His account of the Creation begins as follows:

"Ne waes her tha giet, nymthe heolster-sceado,	"Nor had there here as yet, save the vault-shadow,
Wiht geworden; ac	Aught existed; but this

thes wida grund
Stod deop and dim —
drihtue fremde,
Idel and unnyt."

wide abyss
Stood deep and dim —
strange to its Lord,
Idle and useless."

The First Prose

Baeda, or the Venerable Bede, as he is generally called, may be considered the first writer of English prose, for although most of his works were in Latin, he made an English translation of the *Gospel of St. John.* But to King Alfred has rightfully been given the name of Father of English Prose because of the numerous translations he made from Latin into English. He gave to his people in their own language all that was best in existing works. These lines are from him:

"Gethenc hwilce witu us tha becomon for thisse woruld, tha we hit na hwaether ne selfe ne lufedon, ne eac othrum man num ne lyfdon. Thone naman anne we lufdon thaet we Christene waeron, and swithe feawa tha theawas."

"Think what kind of punishments shall come to us for this world, if we neither loved it ourselves nor left it to other men. We have loved only the name of being Christians, and very few of the duties."

From the eighth to the twelfth centuries, a number of writers compiled the history of their

times and the results are known as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the most important prose work prior to the fourteenth century. It is extremely interesting in its pictures of the times and it gives a remarkably clear insight into the changes the language underwent in the four hundred years that elapsed between the beginning and the completion of the *Chronicle*.

The fourteenth century saw many notable events in the history of England, but the most far-reaching were those which led to the increasing power of the Lower House of Parliament and to the literary awakening that culminated in the genius of Geoffrey Chaucer.

Piers Plowman

Sir John Mandeville, a great traveler, wrote an account of his wanderings and William Langland composed a long poem called *The Vision of Piers the Plowman*, a satire on social manners and customs. It was very popular at the time and second in influence only to the fiery teaching of the ardent reformer, John Wyclif. The poem was after the old models and was the last long poem written in the purely alliterative vein. These lines show something of the form:

"In a *s*omer *s*eson whan *s*oft was the *s*onne,
I *sh*ope me in *sh*roudes as I a *sh*epe were,
In *h*abite as an *h*eremite, un*h*oly of workes
*W*ent *w*ide in this *w*orld, *w*ondres to here."

John Wyclif

At the same time, John Wyclif was engaged in his translation of the bible. This gave for the first time to the English people a bible in their own tongue. The popularity and excellence of the work he did were largely instrumental in fixing the speech in use among the people and in giving a permanency to the literary forms of the language. This selection is from the 8th chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew:

"And oo scribe, or a man of lawe, commynge to, saide to hym, Maistre, I shal sue thee whidir euer thou shalt go. And Jhesus said to hym, Foxis han dichis, or borowis, and briddis of the eir kan nestis; but mannes sone hath nat wher he reste his heued. Sotheli an other of his disciplis saide to hym, Lord, suffre me go first and birye my fadir. Forsothe Jhesus saide to hym, Sue thou me, and late dede men birye her dede men. And Jhesus steyinge vp in to a litel ship, his disciplis sueden him. And loo! a grete steryng was made in the see, so that the litil ship was hilid with wawis; but he slepte. And his disciplis camen nig to hym, and raysiden hym, sayinge, Lord, saue vs: we perishen. And Jhesus seith to hem, What ben yee of litil feith agast? Thanne he rysynge comaundide to the wyndid and the

see, and a grete pesiblenesse is maad. Forsothe men wonderden, sayinge: What manere man is he this, for the wyndis and the see obeishen to hym.''

Period of Preparation
(Continued)

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

1340(?)–1400

Geoffrey Chaucer

It was, then, just at the time when the people of England were stirring under the impression of new ideas, when the modified English was coming into general use among all classes of people, that Geoffrey Chaucer was born. The date of his birth is not known with certainty and the information we have concerning his life is vague and incomplete. We know he was born about the year 1340 in the city of London and lived a life of comparative ease. As a youth he studied in both Oxford and Cambridge and was a page in the house of one of the royal family. For a while he served with the army in France and was taken prisoner there. He was at one time Comptroller of the Port of London, at another was a member of Parliament and in the course of his life he held a number of other important offices. He died in the year 1400 and was the first poet honored by burial in the "Poet's Corner" of Westminster Abbey. He was a stout and jovial man, with fine soft eyes peering out of a bright face, and by his gracious manners he gained the warm friendship of most of the leading men of his time. To quote Lowell, "If character may be divined by works, he was a good man, genial, sincere, hearty, temperate of mind, more wise, perhaps, for this world than the next,

but thoroughly human, and friendly with God and man."

Canterbury Tales

His most productive period was between the years 1381 and 1389, during which time he wrote the *House of Fame*, *Legend of Good Women*, and the best part of the *Canterbury Tales*. It is upon this last work that his fame chiefly rests. The plan of the *Canterbury Tales* is as follows: Chaucer imagined that there met at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, England, about thirty people representing nearly all classes of society and types of men. Different as these persons were, they were united by one common interest; all were pilgrims to the tomb of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. It was proposed that they should travel together and to while away the time each person was to tell to the others two stories, one on the journey to the shrine and another while returning. The teller of the best tale was to be feasted by the others. Chaucer did not complete his work and but two dozen of the stories now exist.

The best part of the *Tales* is the *Prologue*, in which Chaucer describes one by one the persons who make up his party. These descriptions are bright and keen and in them Chaucer shows marvelous power of penetration into character and has delineated types of humanity as they exist to-day. He has drawn them so perfectly that they are for all time. They seem like the people we know

around us, for human nature is the same in all ages. The knight would be still a very perfect gentleman and the manners of the nun would be as faultless now as they were in the fourteenth century. Goldsmith in the *Deserted Village* did not succeed in drawing a finer parson than Chaucer's and the Wife of Bath is still a type of coarseness and vulgarity. Here is the parson:

The Persoun

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a poure Persoun[1] of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
He was also a learned man, a clerk[2]
That Cristes gospel treweley wolde preche;
His parischens[3] devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversité ful pacient;
And such he was i-proved ofte sithes.[4]
Ful loth were him to curse for his tythes,[5]
But rather wolde he geven out of dowte,
Unto his poure parischens aboute,
Of his offrynge,[6] and eek of his substaunce.[7]

1. Parson, the parish priest.
2. A scholar educated in the University.
3. Parishioners.
4. Times.
5. It was hateful for him to excommunicate any of his flock because they did not pay their tithes.
6. The voluntary contributions he received from his parishioners.
7. Income.

He cowde in litel thing han suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parische, and houses fer asonder,
But he ne lafte not[8] for reyne ne thonder,
In siknesse nor in meschief[9] to visite
The ferreste in his parische, moche and lite,[10]
Uppon his feet, and in his hond a staf.
This noble ensample to his scheep he gaf,
That first he wroughte, and afterward he taughte,
Out of the gospel he the wordes caughte,
And this figure he addede eek therto,
That if gold ruste, what schal yren doo?
For if a prest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed[11] man to ruste;
And schame it is, if that a prest take kepe,[12]
A (foule) schepherde and a clene schepe;
Wel oughte a prest ensample for to give,
By his clennesse, how that his scheep schulde lyve.
He sette not his benefice to hyre,[13]
And leet his scheep encombred in the myre,
And ran to Londone, unto seynte Poules,
To seeken him a chaunterie for soules,

8. He did not stop.
9. Misfortune.
10. Great and small.
11. Ignorant.
12. Take heed.
13. He did not let his curacy to a stranger.

Or with a bretherhede to ben withholde; [14]
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it not myscarye;
He was a schepherde and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to sinful man nought despitous,[15]
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,[16]
But in his teching discret and benigne.
To draw folk to heven by fairnesse,
By good ensample, this was busynesse;
But it were eny persone obstinat,
What so he were, of high or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snybbe[17] scharply for the nones.[18]
A bettre prest, I trowe, ther nowher non is,
He waytede[19] after no pompe and reverence,
Ne makede him a spiced[20] conscience,
But Cristis lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, but first he folwede it himselve.

The *Canterbury Tales* are written in heroic meter, that is in rhymed couplets of iambic pentameter. But there are many irregularities and

14. He did not run to London, to St. Paul's, where he could find a better paying employment in singing masses for souls and be maintained by a brotherhood.
15. Cruel.
16. Haughty.
17. Snub.
18. Once.
19. Sought.
20. Too particular.

inaccuracies in the meter; so many, in fact, that Chaucer has been mercilessly criticised for his careless verse. The better class of critics, however, give him the highest kind of approval and this seems wholly right when one considers how little Chaucer had to assist him, how much he must create himself. Mrs. Browning says, "Not one of the Queen Anne's men, measuring out tuneful breath upon their fingers, like ribbons for topknots, did know the art of versification as the old, rude Chaucer knew it. Call him rude for the picturesqueness of the epithet, but his verse has, at least, as much regularity in the sense of true art, and more manifestly in proportion to our increasing acquaintance with his dialect and pronunciation."

That he was an ardent lover of nature his writings show, as they contain several positive assertions of the fact and numberless indirect allusions that tell more certainly the state of his feelings. For flowers and the spring time, his fondness became almost a passion. In the *Legend of Good Women* he says:

"Now have I than eke this conditioun,
That of all the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures white and
rede,
Soch that men callen daises in our toun;
To hem I have so great affectioun,

As I sayd erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bedde there daweth me no day,
That I nam up and walking in the mede,
To seen this floure ayenst the Sunne sprede,
Whan it upriseth early by the morrow.
This blisfull sight softeneth all my sorrow.
So glad am I, whan that I have presence
Of it, to done it all reverence,
As she that is of all floures the floure,
Fulfilled of all vertue and honore,
And every ylike faire, and fresh of hewe.
And ever I love it, and every ylike newe,
And ever shall, till that mine herte die,
All sweare I now, of this I woll not lie."

He had a keen appreciation of amusing incidents, and worked them into his stories in witty form. He drew these incidents from many sources and used them freely but withal in a way so altogether original that we cannot charge him with any form of plagiarism. He is probably the greatest narrative poet England has known. Of this phase of his genius Lowell has written: "Chaucer's best tales run on like one of our inland rivers, sometimes hastening a little and turning upon themselves in eddies that dimple without retarding the current; sometime loitering smoothly, while here and there a quiet thought, a tender feeling, a pleasant image, a golden-hearted verse, opens quietly, as a water

lily, to float on the surface without breaking it into a ripple."

Of the long line of English writers, most have spoken of him in terms of warmest praise. Occleve, a devoted friend, and himself a writer of no mean power, said:

"O mayster dere and fadir reverent,
My mayster Chaucer, floure of eloquence."

Spenser called his works a "well of English undefiled." Elizabeth Barrett Browning writes:

"And Chaucer with his infantine
Familiar clasp of things divine."

This period terminating with the year 1400 is usually called the period of preparation in English literature, and Chaucer it is who rightfully bears the title of Father of English Poetry. Chaucer is the first of the really great English writers, and the only one of his age whose works will repay study on the part of the student of a course like the present. If every one would read intelligently the *Prologue* and the *Knightes Tale*, it would be a great advantage. The difficulties of the work are not insuperable to one of ordinary literary intelligence. With a little practice, the oddities of spelling cease to be confusing, and any reputable school text has notes enough to make clear the meaning of entirely strange words and of unusual constructions. Soon the charm of his quaint, simple style will impress the reader and the rhythm of the verse will delight the ear.

Studies

1. Take a map of Europe and notice the relation of Great Britain to the Continent. Find the home of the Anglo-Saxons, of the Normans. Locate the regions into which the Celts retired.

2. What qualities enabled the Anglo-Saxon race finally to dominate their conquerors, the Normans?

3. What in order of importance are the elements that make up the English language?

4. Who is called the Father of English Prose? Who is the Father of English Poetry?

5. Compare the quotations from Wyclif's version of the 8th chapter of Matthew with verses 19–27 of the same chapter in your new testament. What word means *follow*? What does the word *sterying* mean? What word have we like it? What does *raysiden* mean? What is our spelling of the words "a grete pesiblenesse is maad"? What does the expression mean? What do you think of Wyclif's translation?

6. Modernize the spelling of Chaucer's description of the parson.

7. Write in your choicest English a paraphrase of Chaucer's description of the daisy. Try to put your paraphrase in the same meter as Chaucer's description.

8. Try to get other selections from Chaucer and read them for the story. Do not at first be particular to get the meaning of every word. Try to get the sense by noting the similarities of Chaucer's words to those of our day. Do not be afraid to guess at meanings. Read the same selection several times, frequently scanning it. You will soon find yourself enjoying his stories. If you can get a glossary, look up the meaning of the words you cannot identify after two or three readings.

Period of Italian Influence

I. THE AGE OF REACTION

1400–1558

The Age of Reaction

The century and a half which followed Chaucer was a period of reaction in which literature seemed to be obeying one of the laws of its own rhythm. After the flow came the ebb.

The most notable event of the time was the invention of the art of printing from movable type. Previously everything was printed from plates laboriously engraved. Now came two Germans, John Gutenberg and John Faust, who used movable letters which could be combined to make all words and so lessened wonderfully the expense of printing. In 1455, they issued the first bible. It was printed in Latin and is known as the Mazarin bible.

William Caxton

The introduction of printing into England was made by William Caxton who, in 1474, published *The Game of the Chesse*, the first book printed in England. He was a hard-working man and in the course of his life printed about sixty-five books, some of them being the *Canterbury Tales* and other poems from prominent writers of the time. The accessibility of these made them popular and refined the literary taste of the people. The most important prose work of the period published by him is the *Morte d' Arthur*, under the name of *The Byrth, Lyfe and Actes of King Arthur, of his Noble Knyghtes of the Rounde Table.* This still remains one of the most fasci-

nating of the old romances and is a long account of the wonderful adventures, the knightly deeds of the king and his devoted companions in war and in love. Later writers have been deeply indebted to Sir Thomas Malory for his graphic narratives. Notable among those who have drawn directly from him is Lord Tennyson who in his *Idyls of the King* tells in matchless verse many of the fascinating old legends.

Sir Thomas Malory

Malory's style is simple, direct and clear, suggesting much to the imagination, but wasting no energy in useless description. When Arthur was dying, Sir Bedivere took the famous sword Excalibur and threw it into the lake. Malory tells the incident thus briefly :

"And then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and there came an arm and a hand above the water, and met it and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished. And then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water." The preparation for Arthur's departure is simple and touching : "'Now put me into the barge,' said the King; and so he did softly. And there received him three queens with great mourning, and so they set him down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head and then that queen said, 'Oh, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me ?'"

Tennyson takes the same incidents, and in his *Morte d' Arthur*, clothes them as follows:

"Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.

Speak out: what is it thou hast heard or
seen?'
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Sir, King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling
him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Cloth'd in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt and brandish'd
him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my
weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm;
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found not words;
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the king,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him as he based
His feet on juts of slipping crag that rang

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —
And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three queens with crowns of gold : and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in the waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge.'
So to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed
his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was
white
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with
drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne — were parch'd
with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed
his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the king;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings."

Malory describes in this way the death of Launcelot:

"Then Sir Launcelot, ever after, eat but little meat, nor drank, but continually mourned until he was dead; and then he sickened more

and more, and dried and dwindled away. For the bishop, nor none of his fellows, might not make him to eat, and little he drank, that he was soon waxed shorter by a cubit than he was, that the people could not know him. For evermore day and night he prayed (taking no rest), but needfully as nature required : sometimes he slumbered a broken sleep ; and always he was lying grovelling upon King Arthur's and Queen Guenever's tomb ; and there was no comfort that the bishop, nor Sir Bors, not none of all his fellows could make him ; it availed nothing. . . .

"And so, within fifteen days, they came to Joyous Guard, and there they laid his corpse in the body of the quire, and sung and read many psalters and prayers over him and about him ; and even his visage was laid open and naked, that all folk might behold him. For such was the custom in those days, that all men of worship should so lie with open visage till that they were buried. And right thus as they were at their service there came Sir Ector de Maris, that had sought seven years all England, Scotland, and Wales, seeking his brother, Sir Launcelot. . . .

"And then Sir Ector threw his shield, his sword, and his helm from him ; and when he

beheld Sir Launcelot's visage, he fell down in a swoon ; and when he awoke, it was hard for any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother. 'Ah, Sir Launcelot,' said he, 'thou wert head of all Christian knights.' — 'And now, I dare say,' said Sir Bors, 'that Sir Launcelot, there thou liest, thou wert never matched of none earthly knight's hands. And thou wert the courtliest knight that ever bare shield; and thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse ; and thou wert the truest lover, of a sinful man, that ever loved woman ; and thou wert the kindest man that ever stroke with sword ; and thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights ; and thou wert the meekest man, and the gentlest, that ever eat in hall among ladies; and thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in rest.' "

William Tyndale

A second translation of the bible was the most important event in this period of reaction. More than a hundred years had elapsed since Wyclif did his work, when William Tyndale determined to make a translation from the original Greek. He labored under the greatest difficulties and in the face of an opposition that would have dismayed the stoutest heart. To es-

cape the persecution of the church in England, he decided to do his work on the continent where Luther's master-spirit had started the great Reformation. By most persistent effort, he partially succeeded in accomplishing his purpose and so well did he do his work that his translation fixed the form of the bible for all time. Wyclif's bible existed in manuscript, but the language had experienced such modifications that the work was unintelligible to the people. Tyndale's bible could be read by every one and printing made it accessible to any who wished to consult it. It is difficult to estimate the influence the book has had upon the literature of the nation; but very few works have done more to form the speech and to fix the canons of good English than Tyndale's new testament.

But the author suffered for his devotion and his liberal spirit. Even while at his work, he was hunted from place to place and finally in Brussels he was betrayed and captured. After eighteen months in prison, where he was denied the use of all writing material, he was strangled in his cell and his body was burned at the stake.

Of this translation Dr. Geddes has said, "It is astonishing how little obsolete the language of it is, even at this day; and in point of perspicuity and noble simplicity, propriety of idiom and purity of style, no English version has yet surpassed it." The truth of this statement will be apparent to any one who reads the following quotations:

"Jesus sayde unto her, Thy brother shall ryse agayne.

"Martha sayde unto hym, I know wele, he shall ryse agayne in resurreccion att the last daye.

"Jesus sayde unto her, I am the resurreccion and lyfe; whosoever beleveth on me, ye, though he were deed, yet shall he lyve.

The Lord's Prayer

"Oure Father which arte in heven, halowed be thy name. Let thy kingdom come. Thy wyll be fulfilled, as well in erth, as hit ys in heven. Geve vs this daye oure dayly breade. And forgyve vs oure treaspases, even as we forgeve them which treaspas vs. Leede vs not into temptacion, but delyvre vs from yvell. Amen."

The Magnificat

"And Marye sayde: My soule magnifieth the Lorde, and my sprete reioyseth in God my Savioure.

"For he hath loked on the povre degre off his honde mayden. Beholde nowe from hens forthe shall all generacions call me blessed.

"For he that is myghty hath done to me greate thinges, and blessed ys his name:

"And hys mercy is always on them that feare him thorow oute all generacions.

"He hath shewed strengthe with his arme; he hath scattered them that are proude in the ymaginacion of their hertes.

"He hath putt doune the myghty from their seates, and hath exalted them of lowe degre.

"He hath filled the hongry with goode things, and hath sent away the ryche empty.

"He hath remembered mercy, and hath holpen his servant Israhel.

"Even as he promised to oure fathers, Abraham and to his seed for ever."

The student will find in the portion of Holinshed's *Chronicle* printed in Part XII, page 72 of this course another example of prose written near the close of this period.

Ballads

It is to this epoch that most of the best surviving ballads should be referred, though they were not collected and printed until many years later. In Part X considerable space was given to Ballads, and *The Three Ravens* and the stories of *Robin Hood* are of this epoch.

See Part X, page 89 and page 101.

These old ballads will always be admired, for though they are rude they are picturesque and full of energetic action, tempered at times by pathetic touches that are affecting because of their sim-

plicity. *The Ballad of Chevy Chase* is probably the most quoted. The following ballad is supposed to refer to an incident that occurred late in the thirteenth century. Margaret, daughter of Alexander III, was conveyed with great pomp and ceremony from Scotland to Norway, where she wedded the King. On the return from the nuptial ceremonies, many prominent personages were drowned.

Sir Patrick Spens

The king sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blude-red wine;
"O where shall I get a skeely[1] skipper,
To sail this ship of mine?"

O up and spake an eldern knight,
Sat at the king's right knee —
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
That ever sailed the sea."

Our king has written a braid letter,
And sealed it with his hand!
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the strand.

"To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway o'er the faem;
The king's daughter of Noroway,
'Tis thou maun bring her hame."

1. Skillful.

The first word that Sir Patrick read,
  Sae loud loud laughed he;
The neist word that Sir Patrick read,
  The tear blinded his e'e.

"O wha is this has done this deed,
  And tauld the king o' me,
To send me out, at this time of the year,
  To sail upon the sea?

"Be't wind or weet, be't hail or sleet,
  Our ship maun sail the faem;
The king's daughter to Noroway,
  'Tis we must fetch her hame."

They hoysed their sails on Moneday morn,
  Wi' a' the speed they may;
Thay ha'e landed in Noroway,
  Upon a Wodensday.

They hadna been a week, a week,
  In Noroway, but twae,
When that the lords o' Noroway
  Began aloud to say—

"Ye Scottishmen spend a' our king's goud,[2]
  And a' our queenis fee."
"Ye lie, ye lie, ye liars loud!
  Fu' loud I hear ye lie;

2. Gold.

"For I ha'e brought as much white monie,
As gane[3] my men and me,
And I ha'e brought a half-fou[4] of gude red goud,
Out o'er the sea wi' me.

"Make ready, make ready, my merry men a'!
Our gude ship sails the morn."
"Now, ever alake,[5] my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm!"

"I saw the new moon, late yestreen,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm;
And, if we gan to sea, master,
I fear we'll come to harm."

They hadna sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the top-masts lap,
It was sic a deadly storm;
And the waves cam o'er the broken ship,
Till a' her sides were torn.

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3. Suffice.
4. Bushel.
5. Alack.
6. Sky.

"O where will I get a gude sailor,
To take my helm in hand,
Till I get up to the tall top-mast,
To see if I can spy land?"

"O here am I, a sailor gude,
To take the helm in hand,
Till you go to the tall top-mast,
But I fear you'll ne'er spy land."

He hadna gane a step, a step,
A step but barely ane,
When a boult flew out of our goodly ship,
And the salt sea it came in.

"Gae fetch a web o' the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And wap them into our ship's side,
And let nae the sea come in."

They fetched a web o' the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And they wapped them round that gude ship's side,
But still the sea came in.

O laith, laith, were our gude Scots lords,
To weet[7] their cork-heeled shoon![8]

7. Wet.
8. Shoes.

But lang or a' the play was played,
They wat [7] their hats aboon.[9]

And mony was the feather-bed,
That floated on the faem;
And mony was the gude lord's son,
That never mair cam hame.

The ladys wrang their fingers white,
The maidens tore their hair,
A' for the sake of their true loves—
For them they'll see nae mair.

O lang, lang may the ladys sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens,
Come sailing to the strand!

And lang, lang may the maidens sit,
With their goud kaims in their hair,
A' waiting for their ain dear loves!
For them they'll see nae mair.

Half owre, half owre to Aberdour,
'Tis fifty fathoms deep
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

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9. Above.

Studies

1. Write twenty lines on the effect the invention of printing would have upon literature.

2. Has Tennyson added any facts to Malory's description of the death of Arthur? Does he contradict any of the statements Malory makes? Compare the two selections and see to just how great an extent Tennyson uses his imagination. Read Malory's description of Launcelot's death and then using your imagination write a description of twice the length.

3. Compare Tyndale's version of the Lord's Prayer with the one now in Matthew vi, 9–13, and in Luke xi, 2–4. Compare the previous quotation with John xi, 23–25, and the Magnificat with Luke i, 46–55.

4. Read the selection from Holinshed's *Chronicle* in Part Twelve, and compare the language with the selections from Tyndale.

5. Read the ballads mentioned for review and then compare them with *Sir Patrick Spens*. Which of the ballads do you like best? What are its merits as a piece of literature?

Period of Italian Influence

II. THE AGE OF ELIZABETH

1558–1603

The Elizabethan Age

The England of Elizabeth

Queen Elizabeth came to the throne of England in 1558 and her reign is the most wonderful in the history of the country. It was a marvelous time, in which every human endeavor was at the high tide of success. The discovery of America had opened a new world to the wondering gaze of the people, and subsequent discoveries and explorations kept England in the heat of excitement. Although not the first in the field, she had sent her Sir Francis Drake into unknown seas, where he entered the Pacific, wintered on the western coast of North America near San Francisco Bay and continued his voyage around the world. Sir Walter Raleigh made his attempts to colonize America and the English prepared to occupy the wilderness of the Atlantic coast. London merchants formed the East India Company and laid the foundation of England's great empire in the east. It is difficult for us to conceive the effect the exciting adventures had upon the temper and the intellect of the people.

However, the excitement of discovery and exploration was but one of many thrilling experiences. England was at war with Spain and that nation gathered its *Invincible Armada* to conquer and destroy the British fleet and invade the island kingdom. But Drake, Frobisher and Hawkins,

hardened sailors and experienced captains, handled their light and lively ships so that they escaped with little injury, while they drove to destruction the heavy, lumbering Spanish vessels. The storms of the northern seas helped the English to the annihilation of the boasted Armada and thereby to establish for the victorious nation the title of Mistress of the Seas.

At that time, the church and the state were considered inseparable. The king ruled as the direct representative of God and whoever resisted the church resisted the government and was a rebel and a traitor. But the spirit which prompted some men to follow the flag around the world prompted others to think for themselves. England was divided between the Catholic and the Protestant faiths, with the Jesuits at one extreme and the Puritans at the other. In the struggle between them, Elizabeth favored the Protestants and when the Catholics refused to subscribe to the tenets of the Church of England they were tortured into submission. This aroused the Pope and Elizabeth was excommunicated. However, her Parliament stood by her and before her reign was over English Protestantism was thoroughly established and the creed of the church settled in the Thirty Nine Articles that still govern it. But the awakening of the spirit of personal religious inquiry and judgment was vastly more important to the age than the mere substitution of one church for another.

Elizabeth's reign was marked also by storm and stress that was purely political. Her crown was claimed by Mary Stuart of Scotland, and in the ensuing quarrel Ireland, Scotland, Spain, France and the Pope at Rome became embroiled. Her reign was a continuous succession of plots with no little bloodshed till the consummation came in the execution of Mary, who had fallen into the hands of Elizabeth.

In addition to her coarseness, her vulgarity and her masculine habits of rule, the Virgin Queen was vain and loved display, treating the people to magnificent pageants, while her court life was one of extravagance and show. Still people were loyal to their Queen and some of the very characteristics that repel us now were then the occasion of her popularity.

In the realm of pure intellect, there was all the life and energy that manifested itself in war, politics and religion. On the continent, Galileo and Copernicus, suffering every persecution from the Church of Rome, were advancing their theories with a daring and persistence as great as Drake's. In England, Lord Bacon was reconstructing the whole system of abstract philosophy upon a basis fully in accord with liberalizing tendencies, and establishing it upon osbervation and reason.

An age rife with vigorous physical activity, burning with daring and love for heroic deeds, struggling with the most important problems of

government and religion, enjoying display and rapidly gaining the means to indulge the taste, changing its habits and its modes of life,—such an age of feeling, daring and doing must produce a wonderful literature. The age of Elizabeth justifies the expectation and stands unrivaled in all English history. It was the age of Bacon, of Spenser and of Shakespeare; it gave us some of the greatest masterpieces in prose and in poetry, while in the drama it is absolutely unrivaled. But this age of Elizabeth should not be confined in thought to the years of her reign, for the causes which produced such a wealth of literary excellence continued to act through the reign of her successor and even to the Puritan Reformation, though in the latter years other causes were at work which prepared the way for a different school of writers.

The people demanded excitement, were anxious to be amused, had money to spend and were looking for new ways of spending it agreeably. Books of poetry and romance came into demand and the stirring events of the day furnished material for countless tales and the inspiration for scores of poets. The imagination of every one was active and childlike in its demands, so that the influence of the Italian school of writers, which had manifested itself to some extent in the writings of Chaucer, came to be the ruling spirit of the age.

There were literally hundreds of minor literary

characters who wrote and were read, but who are now forgotten. Many others there were who are still read, whose influence even now is felt but whose importance is not sufficient to justify us in considering them at length in this course. However, there are three names so great that any attempt to give them due attention would shut out the others. Sir Francis Bacon, philosopher and essayist; Edmund Spenser, "the poet's poet," "the rightest English poet," and William Shakespeare who bears the greatest name in all literature, these three make the Elizabethan Age the grandest of all time.

For a score of years after the beginning of Elizabeth's reign nothing great was accomplished in either prose or poetry. The quantity written had never been exceeded in the same length of time, but most of it was produced by numerous writers who had no special aptitude for composition. Prose was of little interest and of less value; the vivid imagination of the people demanded the play of fancy and glitter of figures that only poetry could afford.

John Lyly

The fantastic spirit of the time found expression in a peculiar kind of writing and of speech that was practiced by many of the courtiers and affected by brilliant men and women outside the circle of royalty. Its use was not confined to England but the writers of other nations at about the same time became infected

by the spirit. In England it was known as Euphuism, from the name of the principal character in a prose romance, *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, written by John Lyly and published about 1579. Euphues talked in enigmatical sentences, using far-fetched and obscure figures and labored antitheses.

As an example of Lyly's style at its best, take the following:

"It is therefore a most evident sign of God's singular favour towards him, that he is endued with all these qualities, without the which man is most miserable. But if there be any one that thinketh wit not necessary to the obtaining of wisdom, after he hath gotten the way to virtue, and industry, and exercise, he is a heretic, in my opinion, touching the true faith in learning. For if nature play not her part, in vain is labour; and, as it is said before, if study be not employed, in vain is nature. Sloth turneth the edge of wit, study sharpeneth the mind; a thing, be it never so easy, is hard to the idle; a thing, be it never so hard, is easy to wit well employed. And most plainly we may see in many things the efficacy of industry and labour. The little drops of rain pierce the hard marble; iron, with often handling, is worn to nothing.

Besides this, industry sheweth herself in other things; the fertile soil, if it be never tilled, doth wax barren; and that which is most noble by nature is made most vile by negligence. What tree, if it be not topped, beareth any fruit? What vine, if it be not pruned, bringeth forth grapes? Is not the strength of the body turned to weakness with too much delicacy? Were not Milo his arms brawn-fallen for want of wrestling? Moreover, by labour the fierce unicorn is tamed, the wildest falcon is reclaimed, the greatest bulwark is sacked."

And as another:

"The sharp north-east wind doth never last three days; tempests have but a short time; and the more violent the thunder is, the less permanent it is. In the like manner, it falleth out with the jars and crossings of friends, which, begun in a minute, are ended in a moment. Necessary it is that among friends there should be some over-thwarting; but to continue in anger, not convenient. The camel first troubleth the water before he drink; the frankincense is burned before it smell; friends are tried before they are trusted, lest, like the carbuncle as though they had fire, they be found, being touched, to be with-

out fire. Friendship should be like the wine which Homer, much commending, calleth Maroneum, whereof one pint being mingled with five quarts of water, yet it keepeth his old strength and virtue, not to be qualified by any discourtesy. Where salt doth grow, nothing else can breed; where friendship is built, no offence can harbour."

Sir Philip Sidney.

Some writers, greater than Lyly himself, were influenced by his style. Sir Philip Sidney, of whom mention has been more than once made in the earlier numbers of this course, in addition to his fame as a soldier and courtier, deserves mention for his prose romance *Arcadia*, his collection of sonnets and his *Apologie for Poetrie*, which is the first successful critical essay in the language. His style though at first pedantic and euphuistic, grew to be quite clear and forceful with real poetic power in expression. These few lines are taken from his *Defence of Poesie*.

"Now therein — (that is to say, the power of at once teaching and enticing to do well) — now therein, of all sciences — I speak still of human and according to human conceit — is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter

into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that, full of that taste, you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margent with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchanting skill of music; and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner; and pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue, even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste."

The following sonnet is one of his best:

"With how sad steps, O Moon! thou climb'st
the skies,
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What may it be, that even in heavenly place
That busy Archer his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long with love acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;
I read it in thy looks, thy languished grace

To me that feel the like thy state descries.
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?"

Sir Francis Bacon

Very little of Elizabethan prose is now generally read, excepting the essays of Sir Francis Bacon. The first ten of these were published in 1597 but the remaining forty-eight did not appear until 1625, a date, it will be noticed, considerably beyond the reign of Elizabeth.

Examples of these essays and a detailed discussion may be found in Part Three, pages 37 to 48, inclusive. They still rank high in the world's estimation both for the profundity of their thought and the excellence of the style in which they are written. Bacon's style is usually clear, though concise to a most remarkable degree. Every word has its meaning and is fitted to its place in the sentence so closely and so perfectly that it is almost impossible to alter the arrangement without sacrificing the thought. There is little to touch the feelings deeply for sentiment has no place with him, but to the intellect he

speaks in terms that cannot be misunderstood. In spite of its condensation, his style cannot be called plain, for it abounds in striking analogies, brilliant figures and allusions that show the breadth of his knowledge of classic lore. His sentences are rhythmical and of the poetic type, though it is thought that he never wrote but one poem and that of little merit.

Bacon's name is at once associated with Shakespeare, who was writing his best at about the time the first of Bacon's essays were being printed. Basing their opinion on Bacon's great learning and intellectual keenness and upon the seeming impossibility that a man of Shakespeare's inferior education could write his wonderful plays, some people have contended that the authorship of the plays should be credited to Bacon, who, for reasons of his own, concealed the fact of his being a dramatist. This has never been a really tenable hypothesis and is mentioned merely to show to what an extent visionary criticism may go. A sketch of Bacon's life will be found on page 51 of Part Three.

Sir Walter Raleigh

One of the most picturesque characters of this astonishing age was Sir Walter Raleigh. He was a warrior and a traveler who lived through adventures as exciting and marvelous as those of a hero of romance; he was a courtier and one of the most influential favorites of the queen; he was an office-holder, the ruler

of vast estates in Ireland, a pirate, an historian and a poet. He was for twelve years a prisoner, accused of treason, and after his release he was again tried and this time sentenced to the block where he took the "sharp medicine, but a sound cure for all diseases," as he termed the executioner's ax. During his long imprisonment he wrote his *History of the World*, and naturally his mind, turned more or less upon himself, acquired that subjective sensibility that aids in poetic conception. His history partook of some of the peculiarities of the time and his style seems inverted and strained though to a much less degree than most of the Elizabethan prose. He says this of English valor, the quality he possessed in so remarkable a degree :

"All that have read of Cressy and Agincourt will bear me witness that I do not allege the battle of Poictiers for lack of other good examples of the English virtue ; the proof whereof hath left many a hundred better marks, in all quarters of France, than ever did the valour of the Romans. If any man impute these victories of ours to the long-bow, as carrying farther, piercing more strongly, and quicker of discharge than the French cross-bow, my answer is ready — that in all these respects it is also (being drawn with a strong arm) superior to the musket ; yet is

the musket a weapon of more use. The gun and the cross-bow are of like force when discharged by a boy or a woman as when by a strong man; weakness, or sickness, or a sore finger, makes the long-bow unserviceable. More particularly, I say that it was the custom of our ancestors to shoot, for the most part, *point-blank*; and so shall he perceive that will note the circumstances of almost any one battle. This takes away all objection, for when two armies are within the distance of a butt's length, one flight of arrows, or two at the most, can be delivered before they close. Neither is it, in general, true that the long-bow reacheth farther, or that it pierceth more strongly than the cross-bow. But this is the rare effect of an extraordinary arm, whereupon can be grounded no common rule. If any man shall ask, how then came it to pass that the English won so many great battles, having no advantage to help him, I may, with best commendation of modesty, refer him to the French historian, who, relating the victory of our men at Crevent, where they passed a bridge in face of the enemy, useth these words: 'The English comes with a conquering bravery, as he that was accustomed to gain everywhere without any stay;

he forceth our guard, placed upon the bridge to keep the passage' (John de Serres). Or, I may cite another place of the same author, where he tells us how the Britons, being invaded by Charles VIII, king of France, thought it good policy to apparel twelve hundred of their own men in English cassocks, that the very sight of the English red cross would be enough to terrify the French. But I will not stand to borrow of the French historians (all of which, excepting de Serres and Paulus Aemilius, report wonders of our nation); the proposition which first I undertook to maintain, that the military virtue of the English prevailing against all manner of difficulties ought to be preferred before that of the Romans, which was assisted with all advantages that could be desired. If it be demanded, why, then, did not our kings finish the conquest as Cæsar had done, my answer may be — I hope without offence — that our kings were like to the race of the Æacidae, of whom the old poet Ennius gave this note: *Belli potentes sunt mage quam sapienti potentes* — They were more warlike than politic. Whoso notes their proceedings may find that none of them went to work like a conqueror, save only King Henry V, the course of whose victories it pleased God to interrupt by his death."

Sir Walter Raleigh

Raleigh's poetry is characterized by brilliancy of imagination and a certain directness and force of style that bear witness to the remarkable spirit of the man. The following is one of his best short poems. Its authorship has been disputed but not disproved:

Passions are likened best to floods and
streams;
The shallow murmur, but the deep are
dumb;
So, when affections yield discourse, it seems
The bottom is but shallow whence they
come.
They that are rich in words, in words discover,
That they are poor in that which makes a
lover.

Wrong not, sweet empress of my heart,
The merit of true passion,
With thinking that he feels no smart,
That sues for no compassion;

Since if my plaints serve not t' approve
The conquest of thy beauty,
It comes not from excess of love,
But from excess of duty:

For knowing that I sue to serve
A saint of such perfection,

As all desire, but none deserve,
A place in her affection,

I rather choose to want relief,
Than venture the revealing—
Where glory recommends the grief,
Despair distrusts the healing.

Thus those desires that aim too high
For any mortal lover,
When reason cannot make them die,
Discretion doth them cover.

Yet when discretion doth bereave
The plaints that they should utter,
Then thy discretion may perceive
That silence is a suitor.

Silence in love bewrays more woe
Than words though ne'er so witty;
A beggar that is dumb, you know,
May challenge double pity.

Then wrong not, dearest to my heart!
My true, though secret passion;
He smarteth most that hides his smart,
And sues for no compassion.

Edmund Spenser

The culmination of poetic power in this age was in Edmund Spenser, the first worthy successor of Chaucer, who wrote nearly two hundred years before Spenser published his first famous poem. All that has been mentioned as having been written between the two periods falls low in the scale when compared with the melodious lines and beautiful imagery of this great master of English versification.

His early life is lost in obscurity and much uncertainty clings to many of the events of later years. He was born about the year 1552, probably in London, if we may depend upon these lines which were found in his *Prothalamium*:

"Merry London, my most kindly nurse,
That to me gave this life's first native source."

He was educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he was entered as a sizar, one who waited upon the table and performed other menial tasks in payment for tuition and lodging. After his graduation he lived in the northern part of England and while there fell deeply in love with a faithless "Rosalind" whose beauty he sings in *The Shepherd's Calendar*, a poem which, published anonymously in 1579, gave the author at once both position and fame. It is divided

into twelve eclogues, or short pastoral poems, one for each month of the year. In it shepherds discuss various subjects, including love, politics and religion. Compared with the *Faerie Queene* this work is much inferior, but it gives promise of the mastery of style subsequently attained.

In London, Spenser is found the friend of Sidney and the Earl of Leicester. Here he remained two years and mingled in the gaities of the court. In 1580 as secretary, he followed Earl Gray to Ireland and discharged his duties to the satisfaction of his patrons, it may be supposed, for he received a large grant of land and the castle of one of the rebellious Irish earls. He remained in Ireland for eighteen years and left only when driven out of his castle by fire and sword. In the tragic occurrence which resulted in the destruction of the castle, he lost one child and the remainder of his family narrowly escaped with their lives.

It was not until Spenser was about forty-two years old that he recovered sufficiently from his early experiences with "Rosalind" to fall in love with and marry a beautiful Irish girl. This event he made memorable by *Epithalamium*, the finest marriage song in the language. Here are a few stanzas from it:

"Wake now, my love, awake; for it is time;
The rosy morn long since left Tithon's[1] bed,

1. Tithonus, prince of Troy, was the husband of Aurora, goddess of dawn. She secured for him from the gods the gift of perpetual life but forgot to ask for perpetual youth. As he grew old and tiresome she turned him into a grasshopper.

All ready to her silver coach to climb;
And Phœbus 'gins to shew his glorious head.
Hark! how the cheerful birds do chant their lays,
And carol of Love's praise.
The merry lark her matins sings aloft;
The thrush replies; the mavis[2] descant plays;
The ouzel shrills; the ruddock[3] warbles soft;
So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,
To this day's merriment.
Ah! my dear love, why do you sleep thus long,
When meeter were that you should now awake,
T' await the coming of your joyous make,[4]
And harken to the birds' love-learned song,
The dewy leaves among!
For they of joy and pleasance to you sing,
That all the woods them answer, and their echo ring.

* * * * * *

"Open the temple gates unto my love,
Open them wide that she may enter in,
And all the posts adorn as doth behove,
And all the pillars deck with garlands trim,
For to receive this saint with honour due,
That cometh in to you.

---

2. The song thrush.
3. The European robin.
4. Obsolete word meaning mate.

With trembling steps, and humble reverence,
She cometh in, before the Almighty's view;
Of her, ye virgins, learn obedience,
When so ye come into those holy places,
To humble your proud faces;
Bring her up to the high altar, that she may
The sacred ceremonies there partake,
The which do endless matrimony make;
And let the roaring organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes;
The whiles, with hollow throats,
The choristers the joyous anthem sing,
That all the woods may answer, and their echo
ring.

Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,
Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks,
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheeks,
And the pure snow, with goodly vermeil stain,
Like crimson died in grain;
That even the angels, which continually
About the sacred altar do remain,
Forget their service, and about her fly,
Oft peeping in her face, that seems more fair
The more they on it stare.
But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,
Are governed with goodly modesty,

That suffers not one look to glance awry,
Which may let in a little thought unsound.
Why blush ye, love, to give to me your hand,
The pledge of all our band?
Sing, ye sweet angels, Alleluya sing,
That all the woods may answer, and your
echo ring."

It was a few years before the date of Spenser's marriage that Sir Walter Raleigh visited him in Ireland and heard from his own lips the first three books of his greatest work, the long allegorical poem, *The Faerie Queene.* So delighted was the famous courtier with the beauty of the poem that he was instrumental in causing Spenser to return to England and in bringing the rising poet to the notice of Queen Elizabeth. Spenser's experience in London and his gratitude to Raleigh he commemorates in his poem *Colin Clout's Come Home Again.*

Spenser did not long survive the catastrophe that ruined his home in Ireland, but died in London, suffering from privation and hunger, too proud to accept aid that was offered him. His funeral was one of great pomp and he was buried near Chaucer in Westminster Abbey in the year 1596. In the inscription on his tomb occur these words, "the prince of poets in his tyme; whose divine spirit needs noe other witness than the works which he left behind him."

The Faerie Queene was an ambitious undertaking. Spenser intended to celebrate in twelve books the twelve great moral virtues which he saw perfected in the person of King Arthur, the hero of the poem. Each book was to be connected with the adventures of one knight from Arthur's Round Table, and each knight was the allegorical representative of one of the virtues. Thus the first book contains the legend of the Knight of the Red Cross, Holiness; the second, the legend of Guyon, Temperance; the third of Britomartis, Chastity. These were the three books first published and they were followed by three others which are really much inferior. Though it has been contended that the poet completed his work, no other books now exist and it is probable that Spenser was unable to realize his plans. His life in the tempestuous days of Irish rebellion was not conducive to study and the only wonder is that he was able to accomplish so great a work as he did. The adventures of his knights are really reflections from the stormy scenes about him, as the beauty of his descriptions may have grown out of the loveliness of the natural scenery he found in southern Ireland.

Besides the allegory mentioned, a second one runs through the poem, for the knights and other characters, besides representing the virtues and various human qualities, are the prominent personages of the day under such thin disguises that

their identification was an easy matter. His laying the scene of his poem in contemporary England and bringing the notables of the day into his poem was the means by which he hoped to recommend himself to the notice and approval of those who could give him preferment. "In all humilitie" he "dedicates, presents and consecrates these his labors" "to the most high, mightie, and magnificent Empresse, renowned for pietie, vertue, and all gratious government, Elizabeth." To the poem was prefixed an introductory letter addressed to Sir Walter Raleigh, in which he tells the details of his plan and explains some parts of the allegory. A few sentences from the introduction show better his intentions than can any description by another. "The generall end, therefore, of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline. — I labour to poratraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve morall vertues, as Aristotle hath devised. — In that Faerie Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faerie land."

The six books completed consist each of twelve long cantos, the first book containing in all more than five thousand five hundred lines. The stanzas are uniform in meter, each having eight iambic

pentameter lines followed by one of hexameter. This stanza, very musical in its structure, and especially attractive because of the lengthened cadence of the ninth line, is now universally known as the Spenserian stanza.

(See Part Seven, page 22.)

The unusual length of *The Faerie Queene* makes it impossible to give in brief any comprehensive idea of its wealth of incident and its unnumbered beauties. The best that can be done is to quote one or two of the more famous adventures. These will naturally be taken from the first books, as there is a marked falling off in excellence as the poem proceeds. It is as though the poet, seeing his powers failing, clung only to the framework of his plan and filled in his twelve cantos with whatever came into his mind to write, from a genealogy of British kings to a catalogue of the rivers of the United Kingdom. But if interest in the continued poem is destroyed by this unfortunate mixture of good and bad, there is an abundance of detached incidents and separate masterpieces to give the reader much unalloyed pleasure. Leigh Hunt says, "If you love poetry well enough to enjoy it for its own sake, let no evil reports of his *allegory* deter you from an acquaintance with Spenser, for great will be your loss. His allegory itself is but one part allegory and nine parts beauty and enjoyment. . . . His versification is almost perpetual honey. . . . He has

had more idolatry and imitation from his brethren than all the rest put together. . . . Milton studied and used him, calling him the 'sage and serious Spenser.' . . . Cowley said he became a poet by reading him. Dryden claimed him for a master. Pope said he read him with as much pleasure when he was old as when he was young. Collins and Gray loved him; Thomson, Shenstone and a host of inferior writers expressly imitated him; Burns, Byron, Shelley and Keats made use of his stanza; Coleridge eulogized him; and he is as dear to the best living poets as he was to their predecessors."

The first adventure of the Knight of the Red Cross, told in the beginning of the first canto, is the one selected here:

The Red Cross Knight and the Dragon

A gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,
The cruell markes of many a bloody fielde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield.
His angry steede did chide his foaming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.

And on his brest a bloodie Crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead, as living, ever him ador'd:
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For soveraine hope which in his helpe he had.
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
(That greatest Glorious Queene of Faery lond)
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly thinges he most did crave:
And ever as he rode his hart did earne
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne,
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.

A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly Asse more white than snow,
Yet she much whiter; but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled was full low;
And over all a blacke stole shee did throw:
As one that inly mournd, so was she sad,

And heavie sate upon her palfrey slow;
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
And by her, in a line, a milkewhite lambe
she lad.

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore;
And by descent from Royall lynage came
Of ancient Kinges and Queenes, that had of
yore
Their scepters stretcht from East to Westerne
shore,
And all the world in their subjection held;
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld;
Whom to avenge she had this Knight from far
compeld.

Behind her farr away a Dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd, in ever being last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they
past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast,
And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
Did poure into his Lemans lap so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain;
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves
were fain.

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand;
Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers pride,
Did spread so broad, that heaven's light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr.
Faire harbour that them seems, so in they entred ar.

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
Joying to heare the birds sweete harmony,
Which, therein shrouded from the tempest dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy,
The sayling Pine; the Cedar proud and tall;
The vine-propp Elme; the Poplar never dry;
The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all;
The Aspine good for staves; the Cypresse funerall;

The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours
And Poets sage; the Firre that weepeth still:

The Willow, worne of forlorne Paramours;
The Eugh, obedient to the benders will;
The Birch for shaftes; the Sallow for the mill;
The Mirrhe sweete-bleeding in the bitter wound;
The warlike Beech; the Ash for nothing ill;
The fruitfull Olive; and the Platane round;
The carver Holme; the Maple seeldom inward sound.

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Untill the blustring storme is overblowne;
When, weening to returne whence they did stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
But wander too and fro in waies unknowne,
Furthest from end then, when they neerst weene,
That makes them doubt their wits be not their owne:
So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
That which of them to take in diverse doubt they been.

At last resolving forward still to fare,
Till that some end they finde, or in or out,
That path they take that beaten seemd most bare,

And like to lead the labyrinth about;
Which when by tract they hunted had throughout,
At length it brought them to a hollowe cave
Amid the thickest woods. The Champion stout
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave,
And to the Dwarfe a while his needlesse spere he gave.

'Be well aware,' quoth then that Ladie milde,
'Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,
Breedes dreadfull doubts. Oft fire is without smoke,
And perill without show: therefore your stroke,
Sir Knight, with-hold, till further tryall made.'
'Ah Ladie,' (sayd he) 'shame were to revoke
The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue gives her selfe light through darknesse for to wade.'

'Yea but' (quoth she) 'the perill of this place
I better wot then you: though nowe too late
To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,
Yet wisdome warnes, whilest foot is in the gate,

To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.
This is the wandring wood, this *Errours* den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
Therefore I read beware.' 'Fly, fly!' (quoth then
The fearfull Dwarfe) 'this is no place for living men.'

But, full of fire and greedy hardiment,
The youthfull Knight could not for ought be staide;
But forth unto the darksom hole he went,
And looked in: his glistring armor made
A little glooming light, much like a shade;
By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th' other halfe did womans shape retaine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

And, as she lay upon the durtie ground,
Her huge long taile her den all overspred,
Yet was in knots and many boughtes upwound,
Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there bred
A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,
Sucking upon her poisnous dugs; each one
Of sundrie shapes, yet all ill-favored:
Soone as that uncouth light upon them shone,
Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all were gone.

Their dam upstart out of her den effraide,
And rushed forth, hurling her hideous taile
About her cursed head; whose folds displaid
Were stretcht now forth at length without entraile.
She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle,
Armed to point, sought backe to turne againe;
For light she hated as the deadly bale,
Ay wont in desert darkeness to remaine,
Where plaine none might her see, nor she see any plaine.

Which when the valiant Elfe perceiv'd he lept
As Lyon fierce upon the flying pray,
And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept
From turning backe, and forced her to stay:
Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
And turning fierce her speckled taile advaunst,
Threatning her angrie sting, him to dismay;
Who, naught aghast, his mightie hand enhaunst:
The stroke down from her head unto her shoulder glaunst.

Much daunted with that dint her sence was dazd;
Yet kindling rage her selfe she gathered round,

And all attonce her beastly bodie raizd
With doubled forces high above the ground;
Tho, wrapping up her wrethed sterne arownd,
Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge traine
All suddenly about his body wound,
That hand or foot to stirr he strove in vaine.
God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours endlesse traine!

His Lady, sad to see his sore constraint,
Cride out, 'Now, now, Sir Knight, shew what ye bee;
Add faith unto your force and be not faint;
Strangle her, els she sure will strangle thee.'
That when he heard, in great perplexitie,
His gall did grate for griefe and high disdaine;
And knitting all his force, got one hand free,
Wherewith he grypt her gorge with so great paine,
That soon to loose her wicked bands did her constraine.
Therewith she spewd out of her filthie maw
A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,
Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw,
Which stunck so vildly, that it forst him slacke
His grasping hold, and from her turne him backe.

Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,
With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke,
And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:
Her filthie parbreake all the place defiled has.

As when old father Nilus gins to swell
With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale
His fattie waves doe fertile slime outwell,
And overflow each plaine and lowly dale:
But, when his later spring gins to avale,
Huge heapes of mudd he leaves, wherein there breed
Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly male
And partly femall, of his fruitful seed;
Such ugly monstrous shapes elswher may no man reed.

The same so sore annoyed has the knight,
That, welnigh choked with the deadly stinke,
His forces faile, ne can no lenger fight;
Whose corage when the feend perceivd to shrinke,
She poured forth out of her hellish sinke
Her fruitfull cursed spawne of serpents small,
Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke,
Which swarming all about his legs did crall,
And him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all.

As gentle shepheard in sweete eventide,
When ruddy Phebus gins to welke in west,
High on an hill, his flocke to vewen[5] wide,
Markes which doe byte their hasty supper best;
A cloud of cumbrous gnattes doe him molest,
All striving to infixe their feeble stinges,
That from their noyance he no where can rest;
But with his clownish hands their tender wings
He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of shame
Then of the certeine perill he stood in,
Halfe furious unto his foe he came,
Resolvd in minde all suddenly to win,
Or soone to lose, before he once would lin;
And stroke at her with more then manly force,
That from her body, full of filthie sin,
He raft her hatefull heade without remorse:
A streame of cole-black blood forth gushed from her corse.

His Lady, seeing all that chaunst from farre,
Approcht in hast to greet his victorie;
And saide, 'Faire knight, borne under happie starre,

5. See afar.

Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye,
Well worthie be you of that Armory,
Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day,
And proov'd your strength on a strong enimie,
Your first adventure: many such I pray,
And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it
may!'

Then mounted he upon his Steede againe,
And with the Lady backward sought to wend.
That path he kept which beaten was most
plaine,
Ne ever would to any byway bend,
But still did follow one unto the end,
The which at last out of the wood them
brought.
So forward on his way (with God to frend)
He passed forth, and new adventure sought:
Long way he traveiled before he heard of
ought.

At length they chaunst to meet upon the
way
An aged Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
And by his belt his booke he hanging had:
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad;
And all the way he prayed as he went,

And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.

He faire the knight saluted, louting low,
Who faire him quited, as that courteous was;
And after asked him, if he did know
Of straunge adventures, which abroad did pas.
'Ah! my dear sonne,' (quoth he) 'how should, alas!
Silly old man, that lives in hidden cell,
Bidding his beades all day for his trespas,
Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
With holy father sits not with such things to mell.

'But if of daunger, which hereby doth dwell,
And homebredd evil ye desire to heare,
Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
That wasteth all this countrie, farre and neare.'
'Of such,' (saide he,) 'I chiefly doe inquere,
And shall thee well rewarde to shew the place,
In which that wicked wight his dayes doth weare;
For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
That such a cursed creature lives so long a space.'

'Far hence' (quoth he) 'in wastfull wildernesse

His dwelling is, by which no living wight
May ever passe, but thorough great distresse.'
'Now,' (saide the Ladie,) 'draweth toward night,
And well I wote, that of your later fight
Ye all forwearied be; for what so strong,
But, wanting rest, will also want of might?
The sunne, that measures heaven all day long,
At night doth baite his steedes the Ocean waves emong.

'Then with the Sunne take, Sir, your timely rest,
And with new day new worke at once begin:
Untroubled night, they say, gives counsell best.'
'Right well, Sir knight, ye have advised bin,'
Quoth then that aged man: 'the way to win
Is wisely to advise; now day is spent:
Therefore with me ye may take up your in
For this same night.' The knight was well content;
So with that godly father to his home they went.

A little lowly Hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forest's side,
Far from resort of people that did pas
In traveill to and froe; a litle wyde

There was an holy chappell edifyde,
Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
His holy thinges each morne and eventyde :
Thereby a christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth
alway.

Arrived there, the litle house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainement where none was;
Rest is their feast, and all thinges at their will :
The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With faire discourse the evening so they pas;
For that olde man of pleasing wordes had
store,
And well could file his tongue as smooth as
glas :
He told of Saintes and Popes, and evermore
He strowd an *Ave Mary* after and before.

This represents the victorious conflicts Holiness or the Red Cross Knight has with Error or Heresy, the dragon who represents sin or Catholicism, that is, Spain. The Knight represents the Church of England, the dints on his shield being the various persecutions the church has suffered, and the trials and difficulties over which it has triumphed. The Lady accompanying the Knight is Una, or true Religion, Christianity. The Dwarf is Humility or the common people in the church, and the old man with whom they stop for the night is

L. of C.

Archimago, representing Satan or Hypocrisy and Fraud.

Through the machinations of Archimago, the "aged Sire" met by the Knight and his Lady at the close of the last selection, Una and the Red Cross Knight are separated and she is wandering alone in search of him when she meets the Lion. This meeting is described in the first part of Canto III:

Una and the Lion

Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollownesse,
That moves more deare compassion of mind,
Then beautie brought t'unworthie wretchednesse
Through envies snares, or fortunes freakes unkind.
I, whether lately through her brightnes blynd,
Or through alleageance, and fast fealty,
Which I do owe unto all womankynd,
Feele my hart perst with so great agony,
When such I see, that all for pitty I could dy.

And now it is empassioned so deepe,
For fairest Unaes sake, of whom I sing,
That my frayle eies these lines with teares do steepe,

To thinke how she through guyleful handeling,
Though true as touch, though daughter of a king,
Though faire as ever living wight was fayre,
Though nor in word nor deede ill meriting,
Is from her knight divorced in despayre,
And her dew loves deryv'd to that vile witches shayre.

Yet she, most faithfull Ladie, all this while
Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd,
Far from all peoples preace, as in exile,
In wildernesse and wastfull deserts strayd,
To seeke her knight; who, subtily betrayd
Through that late vision which th' Enchaunter wrought,
Had her abandond. She, of nought affrayd,
Through woods and wastnes wide him daily sought;
Yet wished tydinges none of him unto her brought.

One day, nigh wearie of the yrkesome way,
From her unhastie beast she did alight;
And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay
In secrete shadow, far from all mens sight:
From her fayre head her fillet she undight,
And layd her stole aside. Her angels face,
As the great eye of heaven, shyned bright,

And made a sunshine in the shady place;
Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly
grace.

It fortuned, out of the thickest wood
A ramping Lyon rushed suddeinly,
Hunting full greedy after salvage blood.
Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To have attonce devourd her tender corse;
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
His bloody rage aswaged with remorse,
And, with the sight amazd, forgat his furious
forse.

In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong,
As he her wronged innocence did weet.
O, how can beautie maister the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong!
Whose yielded pryde and proud submission,
Still dreading death, when she had marked
long,
Her hart gan melt in great compassion;
And drizling teares did shed for pure affection.

'The Lyon, Lord of everie beast in field.'
Quoth she, 'his princely puissance doth abate,
And mightie proud to humble weake does
yield,

Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late
Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate:
But he, my Lyon, and my noble Lord,
How does he find in cruell hart to hate
Her, that him lov'd, and ever most adord
As the God of my life? why hath he me
abhord?

Redounding tears did choke th' end of her
plaint,
Which softly ecchoed from the neighbour
wood;
And, sad to see her sorrowfull constraint,
The kingly beast upon her gazing stood:
With pittie calmd downe fell his angry mood.
At last, in close hart shutting up her payne,
Arose the virgin, borne of heavenly brood,
And to her snowy Palfrey got agayne,
To seeke her strayed Champion if she might
attayne.

The Lyon would not leave her desolate,
But with her went along, as a strong gard
Of her chast person, and a faythfull mate
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:
Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and
ward;
And, when she wakt, he wayted diligent,
With humble service to her will prepard:

From her fayre eyes he tooke commandement,
And ever by her lookes conceived her intent.

Unfortunately, we have not space for more long selections from the poem but we cannot leave it without the following stanza from the sixth book:

"It is the mind that maketh good or ill,
That maketh wretch or happie, rich or poore:
For some, that hath abundance at his will,
Hath not enough, but wants in greatest store;
The other, that hath litle, asks no more,
But in that litle is both rich and wise;
For wisedome is most riches; fooles therefore
They are, which fortunes doe by vowes devize;
Sith each unto himselfe his life may fortunize."

Besides the poems already mentioned, Spenser wrote several others of considerable length and varying excellence — as well as a great many sonnets, hymns and other minor poems. His elegy *Astrophel*, written on the death of Sidney, was discussed in Part Nine, page 108, et seq. He must have been an indefatigable worker and his natural disposition led him to the quiet and seclusion which were so difficult to find in that troublous age, but without which he could not have written so much and so well. He was altogether unpractical, with no intimate acquaintance with men and affairs. His habitually serious disposition led him into a dreamy existence, peopled with knights and

heroes possessing the virtues he knew, but undergoing trials uncommon to ordinary mankind. He must have had most acute senses always alive to the beautiful wherever it resided, for no poet ever had a more exquisite appreciation of every form of beauty the world has to offer. He was a man of extensive learning and of deep religious sentiment as every poem shows. If he had not been a little above the world in a realm of imaginative goodness he could not have preserved the simplicity and purity of his ideas in so rough and licentious an age.

His poetry lacks dramatic power, for though he gives a wealth of incident, his readers rarely thrill with excitement. The passions displayed seem unreal and theatrical and bear no comparison with the powerful creations of Shakespeare. He can excite horror and disgust and sometimes dwells too long on the hideous and the terrible, but even then there is always a taint of artificiality in his descriptions.

However, he has most wonderful artistic power and his descriptions lend themselves readily to illustration. He is a word painter who handles his colors with a spirit and skill so masterful that we can easily imagine him winning equal distinction with a brush before an easel. His fluency never fails, words flow from his pen with an ease and grace that have been the admiration of the world. They fall into such nice and dainty

phrases, such happy conceits, that the reader is in a state of continual delight. It is not often that a more felicitous line is written than the one quoted from the *Epithalamium*, where the holy priest speaks to the bride "and blesseth her with his two happy hands."

But his greatest power lies in his mastery of versification and in the charming music of his lines. In this respect he is unexcelled and has been the model of many a successor. Lowell says "Spenser has *coached* more poets and more eminent ones than any other writer of English verse," and later adds: "Spenser's mere manner has not had so many imitators as Milton's, but no other of our poets has given an impulse and in the right direction also, to so many and so diverse minds; above all, no other has given to so many young souls a consciousness of their wings, and a delight in the use of them."

One of the peculiarities of Spenser's taste was his liking for old and nearly obsolete words, for the very words that Chaucer used but which had dropped from public recognition even in Spenser's time. His choice of words and archaic spelling made him difficult to read even then.

Apropos of this point Leigh Hunt has written: "He is accused also (by little boys) of obsolete words and spelling; and it must be added that he often forces his rhymes — nay, spells them in an arbitrary manner on purpose to make them fit.

In short, he has a variety of faults, real or supposed, that would be intolerable in writers in general. This is true. The answer is, that his genius not only makes amends for all, but overlays them and makes them beautiful, with 'riches fineless.' When acquaintance with him is once begun, he repels none but the anti-poetical. Others may not be able to read him continuously; but more or less, and as an enchanted stream 'to dip into,' they will read him always. In Spenser's time orthography was unsettled. Pronunciation is always so. The great poet, therefore, sometimes spells his words, whether rhymed or otherwise, in a manner apparently arbitrary, for the purpose of inducing the reader to give them the sound fittest for the sense. Alliteration, which, as a ground of melody, had been a principle in Anglo-Saxon verse, continued such a favorite with old English poets whom Spenser loved, that, as late as the reign of Edward III, it stood in the place of rhyme itself. Our author turns it to beautiful account."

Comparing him with Chaucer, the reader notices how little they have in common. A writer in the *Westminster Review* sums up the case very effectively as follows: "But, compared with Chaucer, the extent of Spenser's influence is unimportant. The difference between the two poets, in this respect, must be traced partly to their different genius, and partly to their different

historical position. The author of *The Canterbury Tales* loved what was real and practical; the author of *The Faerie Queene* what was picturesque and ideal. The words of the one are terse, racy and nervous; those of the other soft, sweet and melodious. The one can be appreciated by everybody; the other only by the man of taste and imagination. The audience of Spenser must, therefore, always be select. Since the time of Chaucer the English language had received much literary culture. For generations before Spenser was born it had been adopted by all classes of Englishmen as the ordinary means of communication, so that in Spenser's time it had almost become stereotyped. No individual writer, therefore, could now affect the language so powerfully as he could in the fourteenth century, when the language was still forming. Chaucer had hardly any rivals. Spenser had hundreds. Chaucer had scarcely any successors for a century; Spenser was immediately eclipsed."

Studies

1. Why is Sir Walter Raleigh a typical representative of the Elizabethan Age?

2. What events happened in America before Elizabeth became Queen of England? What settlements had been made in America before her death? Were any of these permanent?

3. What is meant by euphuistic conversation and why was it so called?

4. What in this course has been said before this of Sir Philip Sidney? Who wrote an elegy on him? (Consult Index.) Who is the "busy Archer" mentioned in Sidney's sonnet on the moon?

5. Read again the biographical sketch of Sir Francis Bacon. Do you think the style of his essays is correctly described in the estimate in this Part? Find in his essays sentences that justify your opinion.

6. To how great an extent is America associated with the name of Sir Walter Raleigh? Is America indebted to him for anything? What evidences of "brilliancy of imagination" do you find in the poem quoted in this Part?

7. What is the meaning of the words *prothalamium* and *epithalamium*? Who besides Spenser

have used the Arthurian legends as material for poetic treatment? Find evidences of phrasal power in the selections from *The Faerie Queene*. Select and learn a few quotable lines from Spenser. Rewrite with modernized spelling and substitutes for archaic or unusual words the selection describing the meeting of Una and the Lion. Compare several stanzas of the selection to see if the meter and rhyme scheme are identical throughout. Just what are the peculiarities of the Spenserian Stanza? Where else have you seen it used to advantage?

The Drama

(In Part Twelve, page 15, will be found a brief history of the English drama, which should be read in this connection.)

Neither in its prose nor in its lyric poetry, excellent as the latter was, did Elizabethan literature reach its highest level.

Christopher Marlowe

The modern drama came into being then and in Shakespeare attained its most exalted height. He was not the first to write, nor the only one of his time. Peele, Greene, Kyd and others were successful, but greater than all these was Christopher Marlowe, who was born in 1564, only two months before Shakespeare. His life was a brief one but he fixed the form and meter of the drama and really established the lines upon which nearly every tragedy published since that time has been cast. He threw aside the Greek unities and depended upon the imagination of his hearers to carry a complex plot over long periods of time and into many scenes. All this he did before his thirtieth year and probably before Shakespeare had published a single tragedy. He was a passionate man of high ambitions, who lived the wild life of those who haunted the theater and the wine shops, and in a drunken brawl he was stabbed with the knife he had drawn upon another. The Puritan writers who followed him took pains to make his character as dark as they could because of their abhorrence of the theater and his

manner of life. It is difficult and perhaps unnecessary to determine the exact truth, for whatever his character, his work bears the mark of his genius. *Tambourlaine the Great*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta* and *Edward the Second* are his four great dramas, great in conception and great in execution. The first delineates a character absorbed by the passion for conquest and power; the second, a man consumed by a thirst for knowledge; the third, in Barabas, sometimes spoken of as the prototype of Shakespeare's Shylock, a Jew most avaricious and heartless; the fourth, a King, the incarnation of weakness. The second has the same subject as Goethe has taken for his *Faust* and it is doubtful whether Germany's greatest poet exceeded in intensity the tragic power of the closing scene in Marlowe's drama. Doctor Faustus, having mastered all earthly wisdom, summons by magic Mephistophilis, one of Satan's spirits, to whom he gives this message:

"Go bear these tidings to great Lucifer;
Seeing Faustus had incurred eternal death
By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity.
Say he surrenders up to him his soul,
So he will spare him four and twenty years,
Letting him live in all voluptuousness;
Having thee ever to attend on me;
To give me whatsoever I shall ask;
To tell me whatsoever I demand;

To slay mine enemies, and to aid my friends;
And always be obedient to my will."

Satan accepts the offer and Faustus has his years of indulgence though not without a troubled conscience and many regrets that are stifled as they rise. The play is weak and almost childish in places but it rises in power toward the close. In the last scene Lucifer and his attendant spirits appear, scholars enter and plead with Faustus, hoping to cure the ills they see approaching, but despair has seized him and he tells his friends his awful secret. They withdraw to pray outside and spirits enter to plague or to console him.

To the last one going Faustus says:

"Oh! I have seen enough to torture me."

The bad angel replies:

"Nay, thou must feel them, take the smart of all;
He that loves pleasure must for pleasure fall."

Faustus is now alone in his chamber and slowly the clock strikes eleven:

Faust. Oh, Faustus!
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually.
Stand still you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come.

Fair nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul.
O lente, lente currite, noctis equi! [1]
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.
Oh, I'll leap up to heaven! — Who pulls me down?
See where Christ's blood streams in the firmament:
One drop of blood will save me: oh, my Christ!
Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ;
Yet will I call on him. O, spare me, Lucifer! —
Where is it now? — 'Tis gone!
And see, a threatening arm, an angry brow!
Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of heaven!
No!
Then will I headlong run into the earth: [me.
Gape, earth! — Oh, no, it will not harbour
You stars that reigned at my nativity,

1. Slowly, slowly run, O horses of the night.

Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
Now draw up Faustus, like a foggy mist,
Into the entrails of yon labouring cloud;
That, when ye vomit forth into the air,
My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths;
But let my soul mount and ascend to heaven.
(*The clock strikes the half hour.*)
Oh, half the hour is past, 'twill all be past anon.
Oh! If my soul must suffer for my sin,
Impose some end to my incessant pain,
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years—
A hundred thousand—and at last be saved:
No end is limited to damnèd souls.
Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
Oh! Pythagoras! Metempsychosis!
Were that (but) true; this soul should fly from me,
And I be changed into some brutish beast.
All beasts are happy, for when they die
Their souls are soon dissolved in elements;
But mine must live still to be plagued in hell.
Cursed be the parents that engendered me!
No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer,
That hath deprived thee of the joys of heaven. (*The clock strikes twelve.*)

It strikes, it strikes! now, body, turn to air,
Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell.
(*Thunder and rain.*)
O soul! be changed into small water drops
And fall into the ocean; ne'er be found.

Enter the Devils.

Oh! mercy, heaven, look not so fierce on me!
Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile! —
Ugly hell, gape not! — Come not, Lucifer
I'll burn my books! — Oh, Mephistophilis!
(*Exeunt.*)

Enter the Scholars.

1 Scho. Come, gentlemen, let us go visit Faustus,
For such a dreadful night was never seen
Since first the world's creation did begin;
Such fearful shrieks and cries were never heard;
Pray heaven the Doctor have escaped the danger.
2 Scho. Oh, help us, heavens! see, here are Faustus' limbs,
All torn asunder by the hand of death.
3 Scho. The devils whom Faustus served have torn him thus;

For 'twixt the hours of twelve and one, me thought
I heard him shriek and cry aloud for help;
At which selftime the house seemed all on fire,
With dreadful horror of these damnèd fiends.

William Shakespeare

Five great men stand supreme in the history of the world's literature, each achieving his fame in the language of a different race and in a different age, but all read with delight by every cultured person in every nation since they wrote. More than seven hundred years before Christ, Homer wrote for the Greeks; Vergil wrote in Latin a few years before the beginning of the Christian era; about thirteen hundred years later Dante gave eternal power to Italian poetry; Shakespeare followed in three hundred years; and two centuries later Goethe became Germany's greatest writer. It took twenty-five centuries to produce the five masters, and it is not probable that their equal will be found except in the genius of another nation and in another tongue.

Any account of English literature that does not give large space to Shakespeare must be defective. In Part Ten of this course, page 60, is printed one of his sonnets, and Parts Eleven and Twelve are devoted to *Macbeth* and Shakespeare. There will be found on page 125 of Part Twelve a brief biography of the poet, and in it a classified list of his most important plays. The student should

turn to these references, re-read the articles there and place the great poet in his proper niche in history.

Ben Jonson

Of this Elizabethan Age which we are now studying Shakespeare is the greatest poet, and to leave him for the study of another seems to make too clear the marked contrast. Yet to omit from the period the name of Ben Jonson would be unfair to the most learned of the dramatists and the greatest of Shakespeare's followers. Jonson appears to have been a trifle vain of his learning and to have rejoiced in his superiority over Shakespeare in this respect, yet the two dramatists were good friends and members of the same club. This was the famous one that met at the Mermaid Tavern and is said to have been founded by Sir Walter Raleigh. Jonson exerted a great influence upon his age, especially in respect to the niceties of language. In his writing he was careful, and his genius manifested itself in the originality of his characters and the brilliancy of his wit. In manners he was rough and uncourtly; in disposition, jealous and selfish; in habits, dissipated and extravagant; but when not quarreling with his friends he was active and influential among them. He was made poet laureate and justified his appointment by writing many masques in which he lauded the king and reigning family. His closing years were dark and painful. Ill with palsy, writing to the last to support himself, he

died at the age of sixty-four years. He was buried in Westminster Abbey and above his tomb was placed the oft-quoted inscription, "O rare Ben Jonson."

His tragedies *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, a reversion to the Greek type which Marlowe and Shakespeare had abandoned, were labored and pedantic, but popular at the time. *Every Man in His Own Humor* was his first comedy, and *Volpone* and *The Silent Woman* two of his best. Though not professedly a lyric poet, some of the songs in his dramas had much musical power, as these will testify:

To Charis

Do but look on her eyes, they do light
  All that Love's world compriseth.
Do but look on her hair, it is bright
  As Love's star, when it riseth.
Do but mark her forehead, smoother
  Than words that soothe her;
And from her arched brows such a grace
  Sheds itself thro' the face.

Have you seen but a bright lily grow
  Before rude hands have touched it?
Have you marked but the fall of the snow
  Before the soil hath smutched it?
Have you felt of the wool of the beaver,

Or swan's down ever?
Or have smelt of the bud of the brier,
Or the nard in the fire?
Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
O so white! O so soft! O so sweet is she!

To Celia

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise,
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honoring thee,
As giving it a hope, that there
It could not withered be.
But thou thereon did'st only breathe,
And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee.

Theaters

It is difficult for us to understand in these days when theaters are palaces and the scenic possibilities are seemingly without

limit, how in the rude theaters of the Elizabethan period there could be such dramatic triumphs, or how there could have been the inspiration to write for production under such unfavorable conditions.

The first theater on English ground was put up in 1576 and was known as *The Theater*, while *The Globe* with which Shakespeare's name is so closely associated was not erected till 1593. The early theaters were rude inclosures, roofless except that the stage was covered and offering no seats to those who remained on the ground floor. In fact the floor was often the ground and the less favored part of the audience, standing, crowded the pit, and might well be called "groundlings." Admission to this part of the house was about one penny, but around the sides of the theater were more comfortable boxes where wealthier people could obtain seats for a couple of shillings. There was little or no scenery and a board marked "Dunsinane" might be all there was to localize Macbeth's castle. The costumes, however, were showy and elaborate, and the acting sincere and excellent, even by the young men who played the female characters. The plays began about three in the afternoon and continued to their close unless a heavy shower of rain sent the spectators scurrying home, or an excited audience, dissatisfied with the histrionic efforts, mobbed the players.

When one now reads the plays and poetry of

that age he wonders at the obscenity of the language and the hideous vulgarity of many of the plots. There is some excuse for this as the customs of the day warranted a license that would not be tolerated now. Fortunately, those things so offensive to our more refined modern taste are rarely vital and may be discarded without injury to the drama or the poem.

Beaumont and Fletcher

Two writers, usually classified with those of the Puritan Age, partake so largely of Elizabethan characteristics that they are mentioned here. These two men, neither of whom was married, lived together in closest intimacy, sharing the same room and even holding their wardrobe in common. Their work was done together and it is impossible now to tell what portion each contributed. But John Fletcher (1579–1625) was five years older than Francis Beaumont (1584–1616) and lived nine years after the death of his friend. During this latter period he wrote many plays and by the comparison of these with the dramas written by the two, critics have felt able to ascribe to Beaumont the more tragic and noble parts, while to Fletcher they give the credit for the gaiety and humor. Still no separation can be complete, and their names are commonly spoken together and their plays known as the work of one, Beaumont and Fletcher. It was a curious literary partnership resulting in the production of many plays full of noble sentiment and

tender pathos, varied by comic situations and witty conversation, but soiled for the modern reader by the prevalent vulgarity of the age.

Other dramatists succeeded in writing plays of merit but after Shakespeare there was a rapid decline and soon the Puritans closed the theaters and there was no further call for dramatic composition. After the Restoration the drama was revived and writers grew famous for a time; but with the complete passing of Elizabethan influences dramatic productions ceased to be an important factor in our literature.

Studies

1. What great dramas have you seen upon the stage? Have you read them since you saw them acted?

2. What are the "Greek unities"?

3. Why did Puritan writers try to blacken the character of Christopher Marlowe?

4. In the selection from *Doctor Faustus* what figure is used in the words "Fair nature's eyes", in "time runs", in "Mountains and hills come, come and fall on me", in "like a foggy mist"? Who was Pythagoras? What is metempsychosis?

5. What do we know of Shakespeare's early life? Was there anything in it to prepare him to write as he did? Did his life in London directly contribute to his playwriting? Is there anything in *Macbeth* that indicates the manners and customs of the time at which it was written? Does *Macbeth* call for much scenery? Compare the humor of *Much Ado About Nothing* with that in other plays. Which depends most upon funny situations, which upon amusing dialogue, which upon absurd or laughable characters?

6. Name the Elizabethan dramatists in order of time, in order of rank. Why are Beaumont and Fletcher included with them?

7. What are the chief characteristics of the Elizabethan Age? In what does it excel all others? What reasons can you see for such excellence?

The Puritan Age

The Puritan Age

The splendor of the Elizabethan Age gave way very quickly to an entirely different condition of life. People learned that not everything was possible even to themselves, favored as they were by living at such a time. The *New Learning* met problems it was impossible for it to solve and the wealth that flowed into the coffers of the State was found to have its limitations. The blaze of glory that marked Elizabeth's reign faded away and her weak successors, clinging to their divine right to rule, saw darkness settling about the throne. The people, inspired perhaps by the intellectual awakening they had witnessed, began to question and to doubt. Particularly in religious matters was discussion keen and radical. The same indomitable spirit that had led in discovery and exploration in a material world, prompted many to question the rights of the king and the domination of the clergy. James I was a cowardly king, disagreeable in his personal appearance and conceited enough to prompt him to direct his own course regardless of the warnings he received from his outraged people. Constantly insisting on his divine right to rule, he alienated his friends, and his reign was a constant struggle with his parliament. When "the wisest fool in Christendom" died he had lost much of his power and the House of Commons had gained it. In

religion, the Puritan and Independent parties had grown and were already insisting on a recognition which it would have been wise to grant them. James died in 1625 and was succeeded by his son Charles I, who reaped all the fatal consequences of his father's weakness and obstinacy. Himself a man of conscientious personal conduct, Charles conceived the idea that as king he could do no wrong and his public career became full of enormities. His conduct hastened the catastrophe.

The Puritans

During the reign of Elizabeth, the Puritans were a small body of enthusiasts attracting little attention, but they increased rapidly in numbers while James was king and under Charles became the power that overthrew him. Largely composed of members of the middle classes, they believed in sober dress, simple manners, plain meeting-houses and little ceremonial in their services. They were strict in their habits and looked with violent disapproval upon all forms of dissipation; indeed they carried this to such an extreme that they wore clothes of sober colors, clipped their hair short, interlarded their conversation with biblical quotations and gave to their children strange biblical names. But they were sincere, determined, and obstinate to a degree. Though they preached and prayed and sang their nasal hymns, they could fight to the death against any encroachment upon their political or religious rights.

The Revolution

The Revolution

The twenty-four years of Charles's reign were a constant struggle which finally terminated in the civil war. On one side were the country gentlemen, the clergy, the nobility and the king, known collectively as the Cavaliers, because of their gallant bearing and dashing ways. Against them were arrayed the small farmers and shop-keepers with now and then a nobleman, all finally led by the Master Roundhead, Oliver Cromwell. The struggle wavered back and forth between the two parties till on Marston Moor and at Naseby, Cromwell and his famous Ironsides, his God-fearing, praying, fighting army, came out victorious. Change followed change. The king who had fled to Scotland was surrendered to Parliament and by it tried and executed. The House of Lords was abolished and England became a republic known as the Commonwealth, governed nominally by a council of which John Milton was Secretary. Troubles thickened about the young republic and again Cromwell rushed to its aid. Forcibly driving out the inefficient Parliament and summoning a new one, Cromwell was declared Protector. For five years he was king in everything but name, and during that time compelled respect abroad by his victorious arms and his far-seeing policy. At home he was arbitrary and exacting, but his tyrannies grew out of his love for his country and not from love of personal power. The Puritans went to great lengths.

Montgomery says, "Puritan fanaticism closed all places of amusement; it condemned mirth as ungodly; it was a sin to dance round a Maypole or to eat mince pie at Christmas. Fox hunting and horse racing were forbidden, and bear-baiting prohibited, 'not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.'"

Oliver Cromwell died in 1658 and his eldest son Richard succeeded to the protectorate only to be deposed after eight months of inefficient attempts to carry out the plans of his father. The sudden fall of "Tumble-Down-Dick" marked the close of Puritan control and the restoration of the Stuarts in the person of Charles II, who came to the throne in 1660.

The English revolution brought about such changes not only in the government of the country but also in the religion, habits of thought and daily customs that the literature of the Puritan epoch could not be like that of the lively days of Elizabeth. Lightness and frivolity disappeared and in their place came the serious thought and devout belief of the Roundheads. Moreover, an age of war and bloodshed is not conducive to literary effort, especially when the cause for which the war is fought is one that involves the daily interests not only of the actual contestants but of the would-be quiet onlookers. The period, too, was a brief one. The reader is inclined to forget

this when he thinks of the events that crowded its daily history. When Shakespeare died Milton was eight years old.

PROSE

Though the period is short, it is worthy of most careful consideration. Its one great writer was Milton, and he is the greatest poet excepting Shakespeare that England has known. Bunyan stands for the prose of the epoch, though if Milton's fame as a poet had not been of such transcendent greatness he might himself have retained his reputation as a writer of strong argumentative prose. The writings of the time are full of religious experiences and personal theological beliefs. There were other prose writers but their chief title to remembrance is based upon the high principles they advocated rather than upon the excellence of their literary style.

Izaak Walton

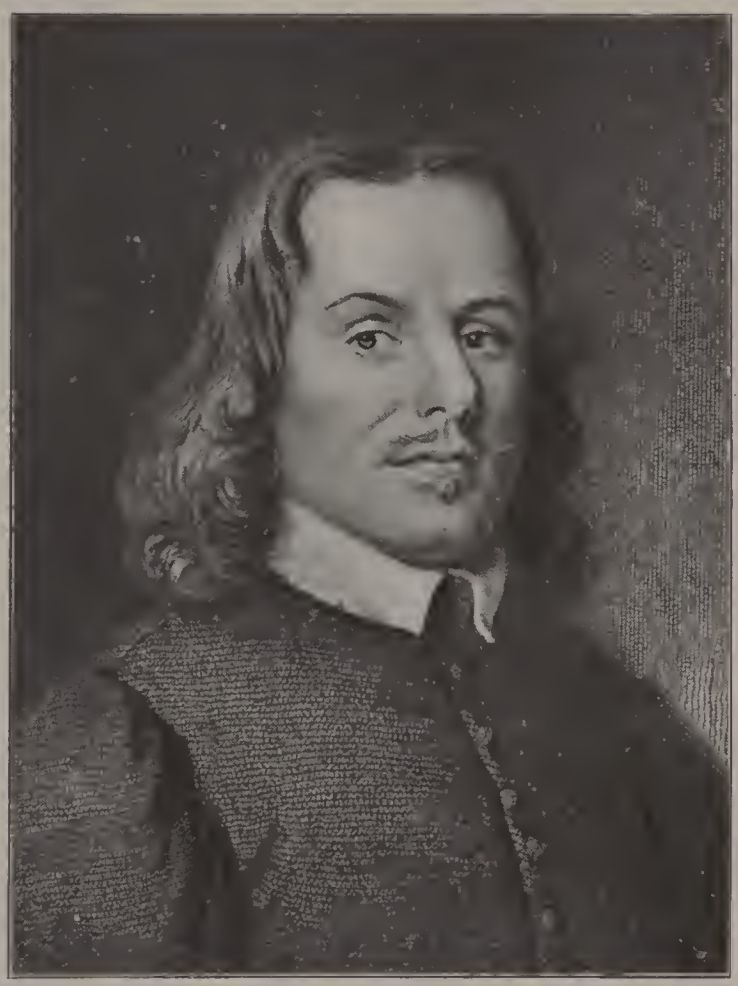
It was the period in which Jeremy Taylor wrote his *Holy Living and Dying*, which to-day is a classic with people of strong religious tendencies; Richard Baxter wrote his *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*; Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682) penned his *Religio Medici*; and Izaak Walton (most charming figure of all) gave us *The Compleat Angler* which every lover of nature and the piscatorial art still reads with unfailing delight. Hear what he says of angling:

"But turn out of the way a little, good scholar, towards yonder high honeysuckle hedge; there we'll sit and sing whilst this shower falls so gently upon the teeming earth, and gives yet a sweeter smell to the lovely flowers that adorn these verdant meadows.

"Look, under that broad beech-tree, I sat down when I was last this way a-fishing, and the birds in the adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an echo, whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow tree, near to the brow of that primrose-hill; there I sat viewing the silver streams glide silently towards their center, the tempestuous sea; yet sometimes opposed by rugged roots and pebble stones, which broke their waves, and turned them into foam: and sometimes I beguiled time by viewing the harmless lambs, some leaping securely in the cool shade, whilst others sported themselves in the cheerful sun, and saw others craving comfort from the swollen udders of their bleating dams. As I thus sat, these and other sights had so fully possessed my soul with content, that I thought, as the poet has happily expressed it,

"'Twas for that time lifted above earth,
And possessed joys not promised in my birth.'

. . . . . .



"No life, my honest scholar, no life so happy and so pleasant as the life of a well-governed angler; for when the lawyer is swallowed up with business, and the statesman is preventing or contriving plots, then we sit on cowslip-banks, hear the birds sing, and possess ourselves in as much quietness as these silent silver streams, which we now see glide so quietly by us. Indeed, my good scholar, we may say of angling, as Dr. Boteler said of strawberries: 'Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did;' and so, if I might be judge, God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation, than angling."

John Bunyan

John Bunyan did not write his *Pilgrim's Progress* until after the Restoration, but he is so entirely Puritan in sentiment and expression that he should be placed with Milton and his congeners.

That the profane and dissolute son of a country tinker, with little education and no taste for books, should become a great preacher is remarkable; that he should have the courage to fight with Cromwell against the king and then possess the endurance to live for twelve years in jail; and that under such surveillance he should be able to write a book more widely read than any other

excepting the bible, is enough to make the man one of the few great characters of a nation. Yet such is John Bunyan's career. His *Pilgrim's Progress*, the culmination of English prose allegory, is written in a style that is simple, clear and dramatic, and the allegorical characters are so truly painted by his vivid imagination that they become real flesh and blood persons. It is evident from the vitality of his characters and the nervous vigor of his style that Bunyan's message came from his heart, that he was writing of the terrible anxiety and the awful soul-crises through which he had passed in his own stormy career. One quotation is subjoined:

The Land of Beulah—The Fords of the River—At Home

Now I saw in my dream that by this time the pilgrims got over the Enchanted Ground; and, entering into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant, the way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season. Yea, here they heard continually 'the singing of birds,' and saw every day 'the flowers' appear in the earth, and heard 'the voice of the turtle' in the land. In this country the sun shineth night and day; wherefore this was beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and also out

of the reach of Giant Despair; neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting Castle. Here they were within sight of the City they were going to; also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof; for in this land the shining ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of heaven. In this land also the contract between the Bride and the Bridegroom was renewed; yea, here, 'as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so doth their God rejoice over them.' Here they had no want of corn and wine: for in this place they met with abundance of what they had sought for in all their pilgrimage. Here they heard voices from out of the City, loud voices, saying, 'Say ye to the daughters of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh! Behold, his reward is with him!' (Isaiah 62:11–12). Here all the inhabitants of the country called them 'the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, sought out,' etc.

Now, as they walked in this land, they had more rejoicing than in parts more remote from the kingdom to which they were bound; and drawing near to the City they had yet a more perfect view thereof. It was built of pearls and precious stones; also the streets thereof were paved with gold; so that, by

reason of the natural glory of the City, and the reflection of the sun-beams upon it, Christian with desire fell sick. Hopeful also had a fit or two of the same disease. Wherefore here they lay by it awhile, crying out because of their pangs, 'If ye see my Beloved, tell him that I am sick of love.'

But, being a little strengthened, and better able to bear their sickness, they walked on their way, and came yet nearer and nearer, where were orchards, vineyards, and gardens; and their gates opened into the highway. Now, as they came up to these places, behold the gardener stood in the way: to whom the pilgrims said, Whose goodly vineyards and gardens are these? He answered, They are the King's, and are planted here for his own delights, and also for the solace of pilgrims. So the gardener had them into the vineyards, and bid them refresh themselves with the dainties: he also showed them there the King's walks and the arbours, where he delighted to be: and here they tarried and slept.

Now I beheld in my dream, that they talked more in their sleep at this time, than ever they did in all their journey: and being in a muse thereabouts, the gardener said even to me, Wherefore musest thou at the matter?

It is the nature of the fruit of the grapes of these vineyards 'to go down so sweetly as to cause the lips of them that are asleep to speak.'

So I saw that when they awoke they addressed themselves to go up to the City. But, as I said, the reflection of the sun upon the City (for the City was pure gold), was so extremely glorious that they could not as yet with open face behold it, but through an instrument made for that purpose. So I saw, that as they went on, there met them two men in raiment that shone like gold, also their faces shone as the light.

These men asked the pilgrims whence they came; and they told them. They also asked them where they had lodged, and what difficulties and dangers, what comforts and pleasures, they had met in the way; and they told them. Then said the men that met them, You have but two difficulties more to meet with, and then you are in the City.

Christian then and his companion asked the men to go along with them; so they told them that they would; but, said they, You must obtain it by your own faith. So I saw in my dream, that they went on together till they came in sight of the gate.

Now I further saw that between them and

the gate was a river; but there was no bridge to go over, and the river was very deep. At the sight therefore of this river, the pilgrims were much stunned; but the men that went with them, said, You must go through or you cannot come at the gate.

The pilgrims then began to inquire if there was no other way to the gate. To which they answered, Yes; but there hath not any, save two — to wit, Enoch and Elijah — been permitted to tread that path since the foundation of the world; nor shall until the last trumpet shall sound. The pilgrims then (especially Christian) began to despond, and looked this way and that, but could find no way by which they might escape the river. Then they asked the men if the waters were all of the same depth? They said no; yet they could not help them in that case; for, said they, you shall find it deeper or shallower, as you believe in the King of the place.

They then addressed themselves to the water, and, entering, Christian began to sink, and crying out to his good friend Hopeful, he said, 'I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head, all the waves go over me. Selah.'

Then said the other, Be of good cheer, my

brother; I feel the bottom, and it is good. Then said Christian, Ah, my friend, the sorrows of death have compassed me about, I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey. And with that a great darkness and horror fell upon him. Also here he in a great measure lost his senses, so that he could neither remember nor orderly talk of any of those sweet refreshments that he had met with in the way of his pilgrimage. But all the words that he spoke still tended to discover that he had horror of mind, and heart-fears that he should die in that river, and never obtain entrance in at the gate. Here also, as they that stood by perceived, he was much in the troublesome thoughts of the sins he had committed, both since and before he began to be a pilgrim. It was also observed that he was troubled with apparitions of hobgoblins and evil spirits; for, ever and anon he would intimate so much by words. Hopeful, therefore, here had so much ado to keep his brother's head above water; yea, sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then, ere a while, he would rise up again half dead. Hopeful did also endeavor to comfort him saying, Brother, I see the gate, and men standing by to receive us. But Christian

would answer, It is you, it is you they wait for; for you have been hopeful ever since I knew you. And so have you, said he to Christian. Ah, brother (said he) surely if I was right He would now arise to help me; but for my sins He hath brought me into the snare, and hath left me. Then said Hopeful, My brother, you have quite forgot the text, where it is said of the wicked, 'There are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm; they are not troubled as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.' These troubles and distresses that you go through are no sign that God hath forsaken you; but are sent to try you, whether you will call to mind that which heretofore you have received of his goodness, and live upon him in your distresses.

Then I saw in my dream that Christian was in a muse awhile. To whom also Hopeful added these words, 'Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.' And with that Christian brake out with a loud voice, Oh, I see him again! and he tells me, 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.' Then they both took courage, and the enemy was after that as still as a stone, until they were gone over. Christian therefore

presently found ground to stand upon, and so it followed that the rest of the river was but shallow; thus they got over.

Now upon the bank of the river, on the other side, they saw the two shining men again, who there waited for them. Wherefore being come out of the river they saluted them, saying, 'We are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.' Thus they went along towards the gate.

Now you must note that the city stood upon a mighty hill; but the pilgrims went up that hill with ease, because they had these two men to lead them up by the arms; also they had left their mortal garments behind them in the river, for though they went in with them they came out without them. They therefore went up here with much agility and speed, though the foundation upon which the city was framed was higher than the clouds. They therefore went up through the regions of the air, sweetly talking as they went, being comforted because they safely got over the river, and had such glorious companions to attend them.

The talk that they had with the shining ones was about the glory of the place; who

told them that the beauty and glory of it was inexpressible. There, said they, is 'Mount Zion the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, the spirits of just men made perfect.' You are going now, said they, to the paradise of God, wherein you shall see the Tree of Life, and eat of the never-fading fruits thereof: and when you come there you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of eternity. There you shall not see again such things as you saw when you were in the lower regions of the earth, to wit, sorrow, sickness, and death; for the former things are passed away. You are going now to Abraham, to Isaac and Jacob, and to the prophets, men that God hath 'taken away from the evil to come,' and that are now 'resting upon their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.' The men then asked, What must we do in the holy place? To whom it was answered, You must there receive the comforts of all your toil, and have joy for all your sorrow; you must reap what you have sown, even the fruit of all your prayers, and tears, and sufferings for the King by the way. In that place you must wear crowns of gold, and enjoy the perpetual sight and vision of

the Holy One: for there you 'shall see him as he is.' There also you shall serve him constantly with praise, with shouting, and thanksgiving, whom you desired to serve in the world, though with much difficulty, because of the infirmity of your flesh. There your eyes shall be delighted with seeing and your eyes with hearing the pleasant voice of the Mighty One. There you shall enjoy your friends again, that are gone thither before you: and there you shall with joy receive even every one that follows into the holy place after you. There also you shall be clothed with glory and majesty, and put into an equipage fit to ride out with the King of Glory. When he shall come with the sound of trumpet, in the clouds, as upon the wings of the wind, you shall come with him; and when he shall sit upon the throne of judgment, you shall sit by him; yea, and when he shall pass sentence upon all the workers of iniquity, let them be angels or men, you shall also have a voice in that judgment, because they are his and your enemies. Also, when he shall again return to the city, you shall go too, with sound of trumpet, and be ever with him.

POETRY

Robert Herrick

Nearly all of the poets of the time were adherents of the king, and their poetry, chiefly lyrical, was upon light subjects and of little permanent value. Robert Herrick, a clergyman of the Church of England, was chief of the Cavalier poets and some of his thirteen hundred poems are worthy of remembrance. He was evidently a man who made no serious attempts to follow out the precepts of his high calling and much that the festive clergyman wrote is not suitable for publication. The exquisite melody of some of his lines and the beauty and picturesqueness of his diction may be seen in the playful fancy of *Cherry Ripe*, and kindred poems and again in *To Daffodils* and *To Blossoms*, where there is mingled a delicate touch of pathos.

Cherry Ripe

Cherry ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones — come and buy!
If so be you ask me where
They do grow? — I answer: There,

Where my Julia's lips do smile —
There's the land, or cherry-isle;
Whose plantations fully shew
All the year where cherries grow.

To Daffodils

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon ;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attained his noon ;
Stay, Stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song ;
And having prayed together, we
Will go with you along !

We have short time to stay as you :
We have as short a spring ;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you or anything ;
We die,
As your hours do ; and dry
Away
Like to the summer's rain,
Or as the pearls of morning-dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

To Blossoms

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do you fall so fast ?
Your date is not so past,
But you may stay yet here awhile,
To blush and gently smile,
And go at last.

What ! were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight,
And so to bid good-night ?
'Twas pity nature brought ye forth
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave ;
And after they have shewn their pride,
Like you awhile, they glide
Into the grave.

John Milton

John Milton, who embodies all that is highest and best in Puritan poetry, lived and worked through the whole period under discussion. To him belongs far more space than

to all the others we have mentioned. Such space is given. In Part Nine, page 138, is a biographical sketch; in Part Ten, on page 75, is his sonnet *To Cromwell*; on page 49, *On His Own Blindness*; and on page 116, Part Nine, his elegy on *Lycidas*. In Part Eight, page 79, *L'Allegro* is printed, and on page 87, *Il Penseroso*.

These are all lyrics and do not show the full maturity of Milton's power as it is manifested in the sublime epic, *Paradise Lost*. The subject of this is the greatest that man can conceive, for its theme is the Fall of Man and the Redemption through Christ. No outline can give any idea of the grandeur of Milton's treatment nor the mighty force of his stately lines.

Paradise Lost

The epic opens with the council of Satan and his fallen angels who decide to oppose God's plan to create an earth and people it with sinless beings. After much debate it is agreed that Satan shall undertake the journey to Earth and destroy the innocence of our first parents. He finds the gates of Hell guarded by Sin and Death, and on his journey meets the Angel of the Sun of whom he inquires his way, and finally descends upon the Earth disguised as the Angel of Light. Satan finds the Garden of Eden and sees the beautiful picture of innocence and happiness which Adam and Eve present. In trying to tempt Eve in a dream, Satan is arrested by the angels guarding Paradise but is allowed to

escape. Eve tells her dream to Adam and is comforted by him. As they set about their usual employment the Angel Raphael comes to warn them, relates the Fall of Satan and the disobedient angels and recounts the story of the Creation; in return Adam gives his own recollections and describes his meeting with Eve and their union. Then Satan, succeeding in his temptation of Eve, who wins Adam to his fall, returns to Pandemonium to recount his success. Here he and all his angels are turned into serpents. In the meantime Sin and Death have constructed a causeway through Chaos to Earth. Sentence is passed upon Adam and Eve, who are repentant and plead forgiveness. Their repentance is accepted by the Almighty but he expels them from Paradise and sends the angel Michael to inform them of their punishment. Eve bewails their fate and Michael shows them the life of man before and after the Flood. Milton does not hesitate to take his readers into Heaven, even to the presence of God himself who accepts from Christ the offer to be the vicarious sacrifice for Adam's disobedience. The account of the redemption of man and the destiny of the church comforts Adam, and the poem closes with the wandering forth from Paradise.

The epic is divided into twelve books, each in itself a long poem. Milton wrote in unrhymed iambic pentameter, but in such blank verse as has

never been written by another. It is light and musical or full and sonorous as the occasion demands. Cowper, writing long ago, says: "Was there ever anything so delightful as the music of *Paradise Lost*? It is like that of a fine organ; has the fullest and deepest tones of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute; variety without end, and never equalled unless, perhaps, by Virgil."

But the gravity of the subject, the elaborate treatment and the weight of classical learning that cumber the lines, make the poem difficult to understand, and make few in numbers the readers who can be said to enjoy it.

It is impossible in the space at command to give adequate selections, but a few significant quotations are appended. This description of Satan is from the first book:

"He scarce had ceased when the superior fiend
Was moving toward the shore: his ponderous
shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large and round,
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the Moon, whose
orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening from the top of Fesolé,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
Rivers or mountains in her spotty globe.

His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great ammiral, were but a wand,
He walked with, to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marle, not like those steps
On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire:
Nathless he so endured till on the beach
Of that inflaméd sea he stood, and called
His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced,
Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades,
High over-arched, embower; or scattered sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses
And broken chariot wheels: so thick bestrewn,
Abject and lost lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He called so loud, that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded. "Princes, potentates,
Warriors, the flower of Heaven, once yours, now lost,

If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal spirits; or have ye chosen this place,
After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
T' adore the Conqueror? who now beholds
Cherub and seraph rolling in the flood
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers, from Heaven-gates, discern
Th' advantage, and, descending, tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linkéd thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf.
Awake, arise, or be forever fallen."

Eden is thus described in the fourth book:

"Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view;
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;
Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only, and of delicious taste:
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed;

Or palmy hillock, or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose:
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant; meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake,
That to the fringéd bank with myrtle crowned
Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
The birds their quire apply; airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on the eternal Spring."

From book five comes the Morning Hymn sung by Adam and Eve in Paradise:

"'These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! thine this universal frame, [then,
Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous
Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.

Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels! for ye behold him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle his throne rejoicing; ye in Heaven,
On earth join all ye creatures to extol
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end?
Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn.
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere,
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.
Thou son, of this great world both eye and soul,
Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
And when high noon has gained, and when thou fall'st.
Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fly'st,
With the fixed stars, fixed in their orb that flies;
And ye five other wandering fires, that move
In mystic dance not without song, resound
His praise, who out of darkness called up light.

Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth
Of nature's womb, that in quaternion run
Perpetual circle, multiform ; and mix
And nourish all things ; let your ceaseless change
Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honor to the world's great Author rise ;
Whether to deck with clouds the uncoloured sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth, with falling showers,
Rising or falling, still advance his praise.
His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud ; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
Join voices, all ye living souls ; ye birds,
That singing up to heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,
Witness if I be silent, morn or even,

To hill, or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.

Hail, universal Lord ! be bounteous still
To give us only good ; and, if the night
Have gathered aught of evil or concealed,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark ! ' ''

It is interesting now to compare the four great poets whose lives and works we have studied, and no better parallel has been drawn than that of Hazlitt :

"The four greatest names in English poetry are almost the first four we come to,— Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. There are no others that can really be put in competition with these. The last two have had justice done them by the voice of common fame ; their names are blazoned in the very firmament of reputation ; while the first two (though 'the fault has been more in their stars than in themselves that they are underlings') either never emerged far above the horizon or were too soon involved in the obscurity of time. In comparing these four writers together it might be said that Chaucer excels as the poet of manners, or of real life ; Spenser as the poet of romance ; Shakespeare as the poet of nature (in the largest use of the term); and Milton as the poet of moral-

ity. Chaucer most frequently describes things as they are; Spenser as we wish them to be; Shakespeare as they would be; and Milton as they ought to be. As poets, and as great poets, imagination — that is, the power of feigning things according to nature — was common to them all; but the principle, or moving power, to which this faculty was most subservient in Chaucer, was habit, or inveterate prejudice; in Spenser, novelty, and the love of the marvelous; in Shakespeare it was the force of passion, combined with every variety of possible circumstances; and in Milton, only with the highest. The characteristic of Chaucer is intensity; of Spenser, remoteness; of Milton, elevation; of Shakespeare, everything."

From the death of Chaucer to the Restoration is usually known as the period of Italian influence because the literature of Italy furnished models for English poets. The sonnet and blank verse are of Italian origin, though in the use of both the English achieved greater skill than their masters. Through the intellectual activities of the Renaissance, as writers usually term the revival of learning that was so vigorous in Elizabeth's reign, and through the shifting religious ideals of the Reformation, this influence continued to be felt. It not only modified the form of the literature and the style of writing but affected the subject matter of both prose and poetry. Love was a frequent theme, imagination was active and nature was a common source of inspiration.

Studies

1. What had Milton to do with the Puritan revolution? Into how many epochs may Milton's life be divided? To what historical periods do they belong?

2. What pleasure can a person, not an angler, find in Izaak Walton's writings? Would an angler, not a literary man, enjoy reading him?

3. What peculiarities do you find in the style of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*? Attention has been called to the frequency of his indebtedness to the bible. Take these selections from *Pilgrim's Progress* and see how many instances you can find in which he uses or paraphrases biblical language. Find peculiar idiomatic expressions that show the language has changed since Bunyan wrote. Do you enjoy reading the selections? What are the enjoyable features?

4. Take the Index and find all that is said about Milton in this course. Read again all that has been quoted from him. Study the selections from *Paradise Lost*. How many scriptural allusions can you find? How many mythological? How many geographical? Write in your best prose a paraphrase of the quotations.

5. Would you add others to Hazlitt's list of greatest names in English poetry?

6. How long was the period of Italian influence?

Into what ages is it divided? What are the chief characteristics of each age? Which is the shortest age? Which is the longest age? What is the greatest name in the period? Who was the greatest poet in each age? Who was the greatest prose writer in each age? Make a table showing the comparative length of life of the great writers of the period. Make another table showing how the lives of the great writers overlapped. With which of the great writers are you most familiar? Which do you like the best? Which seemed most tiresome to you? What reasons have you to give for your answers to the last two questions?

7. Locate exactly in point of time the five greatest writers the world has known.

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